THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF INDIA

THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF INDIA

BY THE

REV. J. MURRAY MITCHELL

M.A., LL.D.

WITH PREFATORY NOTE

BY THE

VERY REV. JAMES MITCHELL, D.D.

WITH PORTRAIT AND MAP

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Duff Missionary Lectureship was instituted in 1880, both as a memorial of that prince of Missionaries, the Rev. Dr Alexander Duff, and at the same time as a means of advancing that cause to which he had devoted his life. By the terms of the trust deed a course of lectures, not fewer than six in number, must be delivered every four years in Edinburgh and Glasgow, or in Glasgow and Edinburgh, or in Edinburgh and Glasgow alternately. The Trustees are men belonging to different denominations, and the Lecturer must be a minister, a professor, or a godly layman of some Evangelical Church.

The author of the following lectures was a life-long friend of Dr Duff; but apart altogether from this relationship, no man living has had a longer experience of missionary work, or a wider personal acquaintance with missions in every part of the world. At a very early age he had dedicated himself to Foreign Missionary work, and no pecuniary or other inducements

at home, proved any temptation to abandon his intention of devoting his genius and his life to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in India. With his brilliant University career, his great scholarship, his classical learning, his literary tastes, and his many and varied accomplishments, he might have fairly looked forward to some honourable if not lucrative post at home; but what things were gain to him, these he counted loss for Christ, and from his early only choice he never swerved. He consequently went out to India, better equipped than most, for the faithful and successful discharge of that work to which the Lord had called him, and in which he found ample scope for all the unusual intellectual gifts with which he was endowed, and for that broad and sympathetic catholicity of spirit which was his leading characteristic.

From a very early period he had made the religions of India a special study. He delighted in the comparative study of these religions and in tracing the points of resemblance between Christianity and Buddhism and between the Bible and the Koran—yet never with the result, which some have arrived at, of regarding the Christian religion as but one of several systems, each of which has its

distinctive excellence,—possibly the best of them all, but yet having no more right to be regarded as the one truth, than any of the rest. While compelled to admit that, compared with Islam the religion of Muhammad, Christianity is making slow progress both in India and in Africa, he yet maintained that few earnest and sustained efforts have been made to influence Muhammadans to become Christians.

When Dr Murray Mitchell was appointed Duff Lecturer four years ago, he immediately set about the preparation of the lectures with his usual enthusiasm, and in as many weeks he had six lectures finished on Paul's missionary journeys. No sooner were they completed, however, than his thoughts reverted again to India, and to the religions with which Christianity was there brought into conflict, and "the Greater Religions of India" became the subject of his thoughts, which never after deviated into any other channel.

For nearly eighteen months he was almost exclusively occupied with these, and with such absorption that he could think or speak of little else until the lectures were finished at the close of last year. They were delivered in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the months of January and February of this year, but not,

however, by him, but by me—for a persistent hoarseness, gradually increasing, had rendered it impossible for him to speak so as to be heard distinctly in a hall of any size.

As it is a condition of the Trust that the lectures after their delivery shall be published and copies presented to certain public libraries in this country, in Continental Europe, and in America, India, Africa and Australia, he immediately occupied himself with their preparation for the press, and with the addition of certain notes to the different lectures. But this, though full of pleasure, proved rather too arduous a task for his increasing weakness, and he reluctantly abandoned the idea of adding as many notes as he had originally intended, and even of giving the final revisal of the proofs for the press. This has been to me, as the delivery of the lectures themselves had been, a labour of love which I cheerfully discharged. I had hoped that my uncle might have been spared to see the volume published, but God willed it otherwise; and on the 14th of November, in the ninetieth year of his age, after a fortnight of great suffering, but of perfect peace, he entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

JAMES MITCHELL.

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LECTURE FIRST

INTRODUCTORY

THE course of lectures which we commence to-day is called The Duff Missionary Lectures.

They are so designated in memory of one of Scotland's noblest sons, whose name is familiar in the mouths of us all as a household word, Dr Alexander Duff.

The object of the lectureship is the furtherance of the great cause of Missions to the Heathen. I have earnestly considered how, in these lectures, this could best be done. Had I possessed the eloquence of Dr Duff, it might have been well to make them a series of earnest pleadings, intended to arouse the conscience and heart of the Christian Church. For most assuredly the Church is, at best, only half-awake in regard to Missions. What said her Lord, when delivering His last behest, as He was about to ascend on high? His words were these: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature:"

"All the world—to every creature." It is now nearly two thousand years since that great command was given; and yet at this moment there are a thousand millions of our fellow creatures who have not even heard the Gospel. It was a true saying of Dr Duff's that the Christian Church has hitherto been only "playing at Missions." She has not yet in any real and deep sense taken up the work. Even the Moravian Church, although nobly distinguished in this respect, has not fully risen to a sense of the imperative duty, or the grandeur of the privilege, of evangelising the world. Narrow-mindedness and narrow-heartedness;—all our Home Churches are chargeable with these things. Remonstrance, pleading, aye, passionate appeal, are still indispensably necessary.

Yet all things considered, I have thought it well to bring the subject of Missions before you in another way, a way which, I would fain hope, may prove instructive and efficient.

"Mine eye," said the ancient prophet, "affecteth mine heart." What he *saw* he *felt*. The misery which he beheld around him aroused his inmost soul. Even so, if you could be transported to India, or China, and

actually *see* Pagan worship, the impression on your hearts would be deep and ineffaceable, far more so than can be produced by the most ardent and eloquent appeal. I shall never forget how my own blood ran cold in my veins, when I first saw a human being bowing down to a god of stone.

For a considerable time past, one has observed a remarkable change in the way of regarding non-Christian religions. For a long time they were considered as little better than masses of unmitigated falsehood, and therefore deserving of unmitigated condemnation. But in recent days we have been hearing of "ethnic inspiration" and so on. This is a strong reaction from the previous state of things. But every reaction naturally tends to run into excess, and ere long a reaction from the reaction becomes necessary. It is high time to assume a middle position—which, indeed, is that of St Paul. The Apostle held that God has "never left Himself without witness" —being revealed to all men in the works of creation and providence, and in the mind of man; but he also held that the nations "did not like to retain God in their knowledge,"

and that the consequence had been very fearful moral corruption (Romans i. 20-32).

Another point. When we study the heathen religions we are often startled, sometimes shocked; and we are ready to denounce the teaching and the teachers as *intentionally* wrong. But, for the most part, that is unfair. It is far better to think of the nations as sick in soul, and of their religions as medicines honestly prescribed as remedies by well-meaning, but unskilled physicians. It is deeply pathetic to watch their treatment of the sick and dying. When the physician has erred, even grievously—pity and sorrow, at least as much as indignation, are the feelings which the occasion calls for.

My effort in these lectures will be to give an unprejudiced and true account of heathen systems. And in so doing I shall feel it a solemn duty to try to be perfectly fair to these systems, and to avoid all exaggeration.

Christians, and especially missionaries, have been often charged with narrow-mindedness—with being able to see nothing but the faults and errors of heathen creeds. If that be true, it is much to be regretted. Heathen

religions are not all "dark as Erebus"; they are not all equally dark; and all, or almost all, retain some elements of truth. My object then will be not to denounce but to describe; not to expose but to expound.

The special subject of the lectures is The Great Religions of India.

It might almost have been called *the great religions of the world;* for all of these—with the exception of Confucianism—now exist in India.

I have lately been reading again the story of our acquisition of that great continent; and have been more than ever impressed with the lessons it so strikingly conveys.

How are we, as Britons, to think of India? With pride, some will say. But a much truer answer is, with awe.

"The existence of the Indian Empire has often been called a miracle. It cannot be accounted for by any process of reasoning founded on experience." So speaks a well-informed and thoughtful writer.[1] Similarly says another of high authority: "As time passes, we are in the hands of Providence, which is

[1] Mr Meredith Townsend.

greater than all statesmanship. Let us think how India was won, and how, when seemingly lost, it was restored."[1]

I trust we all believe in national responsibility, and see that Britain's responsibility in connection with India is overwhelmingly great. The hand of God has put us there. The eye of God is on us there. History is strewn with the wrecks of nations, the "ruins of empires"; shall a fallen Britain be yet added to the melancholy list? *That* we are convinced will depend on our discharge of our national obligations; and one of the most solemn of these is in connection with that great Eastern dependency, so wonderfully given and so wonderfully preserved.

The astronomer Kepler, when engaged in the study of the celestial phenomena, used to say that he was reading "the great thoughts of God"; and it is not presumptuous in us to try to read these as also revealed in the providential movements of the world. We are in India for a purpose—a purpose worthy of God. Let us ever pray that our presence there may tend to the glory of God and the happiness of unhappy India!

[1] Sir John Seeley.

Our subject, then, is the Great Religions of India. In this lecture I can do little more than give you a sketch-map of the journey we are about to take. I shall simply *enumerate* the various religions, and deal with them *geographically*, showing the localities which they occupy in India. Their character, history, and influence will be dealt with in future lectures.

Some of the Indian religions extend over the whole country, and others are confined to special localities.

I. The first which I shall mention—the greatest of them all—is that which we call Hinduism, but the Hindus themselves call *Ārya dharma* — the Aryan religion. It extends over the whole of India, though in a feeble form in Burma and Ceylon.[1] Its followers are, in round numbers, nearly two hundred millions of men.

Hinduism is very far from uniform in character: in different places very different beliefs and institutions exist. Generally it may be called a stupendous polytheism, shot through and through with a stupendous pantheism. Its

[1] Ceylon is a Crown colony, not politically a part of India.

grand all-pervading characteristic is what we call *Caste*. The idea of caste barely exists in any other nation; but it may be called *the* distinctive mark of Hinduism; it sways the Hindu mind with irresistible power. The community is divided into separate classes or ranks. The highest class is supposed to be inherently holy; the Brahman is a "god on earth"; the lowest classes are inherently polluted, and their very touch pollutes.

II. The next system we mention is Buddhism. It is of later origin than Hinduism, having arisen in the fifth century B.C. It may be regarded as a reaction against Hinduism. It arose in northern India and spread far and wide throughout the peninsula; and for many centuries it seemed likely to prevail over Hinduism. It extended also into the surrounding regions: Tibet, Mongolia, Siam, China, Japan; and in all of these countries it continues—and in some of them is powerful—to this day. In India, however, for reasons not very certainly known, it declined, until about the twelfth century A.D., when it disappeared from India proper, though it continued, and continues, powerful in Burma and Ceylon. It is found also, in a somewhat feeble state, in

the upper reaches of the valleys of the Indus, among the Himalaya mountains.

Though *Buddhism* is usually called a *religion*, it is really atheistic.

III. A system very similar to Buddhism is Jainism. The Jains now amount to about a million and a half. They are found chiefly in western and central India. Like Buddhism Jainism is atheistic. Worship is paid chiefly to dead men.

The most distinctive tenet of the Jains is reverence for life: they would on no account put to death any living thing. They provide hospitals, in which worn-out creatures of all kinds are kept in life as long as possible.

It is remarkable that the Jains have always been great temple-builders. The finest temples in all India are those erected by them on Mount Abu in South Rajputānā. The Jains are engaged chiefly in merchandise. Many of them are rich traders and bankers. There are few or no cultivators among them.

IV. Next may come the religion of the Pārsīs or Zoroastrianism.

The word Pārsī means Persian. The Pārsīs are refugees from Persia. Soon after the death of Muhammad, his followers, the Arabs,

broke into Persia, and in three great battles overwhelmed the Persian monarchy. They gave their conquered foes the usual threefold choice of *conversion*, *subjection*, or *death*. The readiness with which the great mass of the people accepted the new faith shows that the old Zoroastrian religion had not deeply affected them as a nation. A portion, however, held out; and of these a small body sought refuge in Western India. They were kindly received; they settled, at first, chiefly as cultivators, and have gradually developed into an important trading community, which has now its headquarters in the city of Bombay.

The Pārsīs have often been styled fire-worshippers, but they resent the appellation, and declare that they reverence fire or light as being the purest symbol of the unseen Deity. They have no idols. They are not polytheists, but claim to be monotheists.

They are a small but highly intelligent and influential body—in character and manners now barely distinguishable from Europeans.

A very small remnant of Pārsīs still exists in Persia itself. They are poor, and much oppressed by the Muhammadans; but morally they are in a high degree respectable.

V. I have now to call your attention to Islam or Muhammadanism. This great religion is by no means confined to India. It is far extended in Asia; it is still farther so in Africa; and it is the faith of nearly half the population of Turkey in Europe.

In India itself, according to the latest census, it reckons no less than sixty-three millions of followers—at least one in five of the population; and the number is still increasing.

Muhammadanism is, like Christianity, a missionary religion. None of the religions already mentioned, with the exception of Buddhism, can be so called. For example, Hinduism cannot receive converts. Muhammad commanded his followers to extend the true faith, when needful, by the sword; and every Muhammadan would gladly do so, if he had the power. We need not wonder then if—as our empire stretches out—we find "mad Mullahs"—as we call them—confronting us at every step. These men—whether mad or sane—believe that in opposing the infidel they are doing God service. But peaceful men who do not fight are also eager to extend the faith. It has been said that they seek to do this for political reasons—desiring to increase the power

of Muhammadanism, inasmuch as every convert becomes its ally. But that is not the sole reason for their so doing. An Arab merchant, travelling in the prosecution of his business, will spend money and take personal trouble to make converts, because he honestly holds that the belief of Islam is helpful towards a man's salvation. Here, then, is laudable consistency.

Muhammadanism, like Hinduism, is more or less diffused over the whole of India. For a long time it advanced through war and conquest. The great conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni conducted ten separate invasions of Northern India, and inflicted unspeakable suffering wherever his armies reached. One host of Muhammadans after another came from the North and extended the faith of Islam. The Rajputs in particular opposed it gallantly; and so, in later days, did the Marathas and the Sikhs; but, on the whole, the Muhammadans have steadily gained ground.

One remarkable result has been that various sects have sprung up, which are partly Hindu in sentiment and partly Muhammadan; and most of these continue in existence to this day.

Of late the stricter Muhammadanism has asserted its sway more than formerly; and

from among the lower castes the influx of converts into Islam has been very considerable. The reason of this success is not far to seek. Every Muhammadan, as I have said, desires to see converts. The lower classes of the people, who are despised and down-trodden by the higher Hindus, know that if they profess Islam they are sure to be welcomed by a powerful community. Should the higher Hindus attempt to tyrannise over them when converted, their rights would be vehemently maintained by the whole Muhammadan body.

Of course it is the same thing if the low-caste native become a Christian: his rights are vindicated. But note one difference. The convert is welcomed at once by the Muhammadans—no questions as to his motives are asked; whereas, before he is received by baptism into the Christian Church, a strict examination must be submitted to. The question has been asked whether missionaries are not sometimes too severe in their examination of inquirers. The thing is possible. I believe that, when once they are convinced of an inquirer's sincerity, they should receive him more readily than has sometimes been done, and that there has been on the whole a leaning to over-

strictness. This is far better than over-laxity; but still, it is regrettable.

VI. The next religion I mention is that of the Sikhs.

The word Sikh means *disciple*. The system arose with Nānak, who was born in 1469. Before his time there had sprung up in India a conviction of the infinite importance of having a *guru*, or infallible teacher. As Muhammadanism extended, this feeling deepened; for the Moslems spoke continually of their matchless, infallible Prophet. Nānak had been deeply impressed by Muhammadan teaching; it is even said he had gone on pilgrimage to Mecca. But, rejecting both the Qurān (Koran) and the Hindu Shāstras, he produced a new scripture of his own—the "Grantha," or Book—which he hoped would harmonise the teachings of conflicting systems. It is morally a good book, but weak in thought. It is pantheistic in theology rather than monotheistic. It inculcates the supreme importance of the *guru* or true teacher. The Grantha is in the language of the people—and this has given it a great advantage both over the Arabic Qurān and the Sanskrit Shāstras. Nānak was a mystic quietist, and the religion at first spread

peacefully. But by and by, his successors took part in political movements, and one of them was executed as a rebel by the Emperor Aurungzib. Whereupon the peaceful Sikhs sprang into a host of warriors. Every true Sikh must thenceforth be a soldier. He stood apart from other men. He would not condescend to notice the Hindu: the Muhammadan he was bound, if possible, to slay. The Sikhs by and by became an independent nation; and in the early years of last century, under the strong hand of Ranjit Singh, "the Lion of the Panjab," they grew very powerful. When Ranjit died in 1839, the Sikhs could no longer be controlled. They made war on the British. They were crushed; and now this pre-eminently warlike race appears to be thoroughly loyal to the British Crown. They amount to about two millions of men, living almost exclusively in the north-west of India, especially in the Panjāb.

We have seen that Muhammadanism, vehemently iconoclastic, earnestly proselytising, and generally victorious in battle, has exerted a powerful influence on the mind of India.

Even so it was to be expected that the large influx of Christian ideas, and of Western ideas generally, that has of late been increasingly going on, would tell powerfully on Hinduism. "Ours," as Sir James Fitzstephen said, "is a belligerent civilisation." The Hindus are conservative, wedded to traditionary beliefs and observances, and time was when Hindu teachers professed to regard with supreme contempt the efforts of Christians to extend the Gospel, but that time has long since passed away. In the ancient Roman Empire the religious influence exerted by the Jews was far from insignificant. Seneca uses the strong language: "the vanquished have given laws to the victors."[1] The great truths which were held by the Jews regarding God and the soul, sin, holiness, heaven and hell, could not but powerfully affect the minds of all thinking men. They might be disliked by a corrupt and frivolous people; but, insensibly, irresistibly, they carried the conviction of many. Even so, now in India, the unity of God, the evil of idol-worship, the tyranny of caste, the goodness of God, the curpassing elevation and purity of the character of Christ—a conviction or half-

[1] *Victoribus victi leges dederunt.*

conviction of these fundamental verities is steadily extending. No doubt, ideas change before institutions, old customs moulder away but slowly, even when the beliefs on which they rest have been demolished. Still, the mind even of bigoted India is not impenetrable, and influential reformers have arisen. The best known name in connection with the recent reform of Hinduism is that of a Bengali Brahman, Rammohan Rai. He was a thoughtful and inquiring man, who studied both Greek and Hebrew that he might be able to read the Christian Scriptures in the original languages. In 1820 he published a book with the remarkable title: "The precepts of Jesus, a Guide to Truth and Happiness." He instituted the well-known Society called the Brahma Samaj. He maintained that Christ was exalted above all other creatures.

The Society has continued to the present time, and has branches over a great part of India. In later days the best known name among its leaders has been that of Keshub Chunder Sen, who was not a Brahman. He immensely admired Christianity, but maintained towards the end of his life the strange belief that all religions are true.

The Calcutta Brahma Samaj, on the whole, makes but little progress in numbers.

The same thing may be said of the Prāthanā Samaj—literally *Prayer Society*—in Bombay. This body has been more under the influence of Brahman leaders than the Calcutta Society, and its references to Christianity have been less frequent and less hearty.

Many Hindus who see that some reform in their old faith is necessary are by no means prepared to go to the same length as the Societies I have mentioned. This is the case with the Ārya Samāj, *i.e.* the Aryan Society. It was founded by a Gujarātī Brahman about twenty-seven years ago. He rejected all the Hindu Shāstras except the Vedas. He asserted that the Vedas teach strict monotheism; and idol-worship he rejected. He maintained that the chief scientific discoveries of modern days—electricity, steam boats, railways, and all the rest are indicated in the Vedas. Dayananda—the name he assumed—probably believed what he said, but the idea was utterly preposterous; and at a great convocation of learned Brahmans his peculiar views were condemned. The Ārya Samāj, however, continues—though scouted by

orthodox Hindus. It is mainly distinguished for its opposition to Christianity.

VII. There still remain to be mentioned the religions of the wilder races—the Hill and Forest tribes.

I must content myself with a brief enumeration of the most important of these.

Beginning from the North, we have the Lepchas in the Himalayas; the Khāsis and kindred tribes in Assam; the Sāntāls; the Kols and Oraons; the Gonds; the Khonds in Orissa; the Bhils; the Todas on the Nielgherry Hills; the Hill Arrians; the Karens in Burma; and the Veddahs in Ceylon.

The religion of these simple races is very largely Animism, or spirit worship, spirits being generally supposed to preside over nature. They are almost invariably malevolent—devils rather than angels. Worship is propitiation,—deprecation of wrath, or little more.

One entire lecture at least must be given to these simple but very interesting tribes. Collectively they amount to nearly nine millions of human beings. Those who are by birth derived from the aboriginal races may be reckoned as about sixteen millions; but many—perhaps seven millions—have gradually

accepted the faith of the Muhammadans or the Christians, or have been absorbed among the lowest Hindu castes.

The population of India is much more than double that of the ancient Roman Empire even in its proudest days. Herein lies a charge —a duty—that may well awaken the most solemn and searching thoughts in the mind of Britain's sons and daughters.

But look at India's history. We may say that her past record is like the scroll of the book which the prophet Ezekiel saw in vision, written within and without, "with lamentation and mourning and woe"—this, at all events, until comparatively recent years. Invasion after invasion from without; incessant wars within; great famines; fearful pestilences;—and all these scourges frequently recurring.

And what has unhappy India had to comfort her? She has had the various religions about which I have been speaking. They meant well—those heathen systems, as I said before; they supplied all the consolation they could; but oh how deeply does one feel that "miserable comforters are they all!"

And now we British Christians are placed in

India, as I said, for a purpose worthy of God. We are on our trial. May our hearts be exalted to the sublimity of our high calling! For we are there, not that we may fatten on India's fertility and enrich ourselves at her expense, but that we may rule in righteousness, and in every way seek the good of India. The discharge of this obligation forms, in Lord Curzon's weighty words, "the supreme touchstone of national obligation." God grant then that we may be able

> "As with some sweet oblivious antidote,
> Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart";

and that, as far as in us lies, we may make India a sharer in the spiritual and temporal blessings which we ourselves enjoy—aye, and teach her to emulate, nay to surpass, ourselves in all that forms the glory and defence of nations.

You naturally ask: Does that day of days appear to be still far off? Even if it do so—"far-off its coming shines," and from afar we hail the gladsome, waxing splendour.

Yet we dare not pronounce it to be far off. And when it comes, we seem warranted in believing that the conversion of India will

resemble that of the Roman Empire, in coming *suddenly*.

Let us hear the opinion on a kindred question of a distinguished English churchman, Canon Liddon: "Long before the Roman Empire was Christian, the air, so to speak, was filled with Christian ideas. The Christian creed was discussed and rediscussed by those who did not yet hold it; and while stray conversions took place in all ranks of life, the mass of the people remained apparently attached to the old Paganism. In the middle of the third century not more than one twentieth part was Christian. In the next century the conversions came with a rush."

Ere long we expect to witness such a rush —or what we generally call *mass movements*— in India. Hitherto, on account of that singular institution, Caste, which binds into unities large bodies of the population—to draw a man from out the mass, has been like extracting a particle from the flinty rock. By and by that strong cohesiveness will tell in an entirely different way; and, when a considerable part begins to move towards Christianity, probably the whole mass will move. Hitherto men have come over individually; by and by they will

come in flocks. Quite possibly the gregarious tendency may act only too powerfully, and men may press into the kingdom because their fellows are pressing. That difficulty indeed is almost certain to arise; and the churches will have to deal with it when it comes.

Still the question presses: Is it likely to come soon? Well, I had rather preach than prophesy; but I believe it will come much sooner than many expect.

I do not ground my belief chiefly on the fact that Christianity is advancing, we may say, rapidly in India; for example, in ten years, while the general native population advanced twenty per cent, the Protestant Christian population increased one hundred and five per cent. But, as one of our best missionary magazines lately expressed it: "During the last few years a vast change has been effected in the attitude of the people towards Christianity. A deep and growing interest is being shown, especially by the young men in India, towards the person and history of Christ. Though, at present, they will have little or nothing to do with Church organisation, and shrink from the thought of baptism, yet they devour with real eagerness any literature bearing on the history,

person, and work of Jesus; and no book in India is in so many hands as the Gospels; and no name looms so largely on the horizon of the thoughts of the people as the name of Jesus Christ."

"They shrink from the thought of baptism." Are they then genuine inquirers? Let me briefly explain the position of religious inquirers in India. People may condemn their hesitation; but with the censure they will surely mingle a large amount of sympathy and pity.

As soon as it is known that any member of a family is inclining to Christianity, the whole household is thrown into agitation. The women especially fill the house with wailings. They intreat the young man not to bring indelible disgrace on himself and all his connections. He is probably married; if so, his young wife, with tears and caresses, implores him not to break her heart; let him believe what he likes; only he must promise not to be baptised. Some of the family probably threaten that they will commit suicide if he become an "apostate," and the inquirer knows that they are quite capable of carrying the threat into execution. He therefore pauses—agrees to wait, and in many cases he comes to think that, after all,

the outward ceremony of baptism cannot be of primary importance, and he can be a true Christian without it. So then, you probably say, baptism is shunned because the inquirer shrinks from personal suffering. Yes, he does so shrink; but many an inquirer shrinks *even more* from giving pain to others. In more ways than one in India conversion work is heart-breaking work all round. If the struggles they have to pass through were only known, a much larger measure of sympathy would flow forth towards the converts. Many prayers are offered on behalf of the heathen in India; many also for native Christians. So far well: but let many also be offered for inquirers, amid their great fight of affliction.

You will perhaps say that these are a missionary's words, and that on such a question a missionary is naturally too sanguine. Then let us hear the opinion of Sir Alfred Lyall, formerly a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service. "In India," he says, "change promises to go on with a speed and intensity unprecedented." He hopes that "India will be carried swiftly through phases that have occupied long stages in the history of other nations."

Oh day of days when East and West that have been sundered for ages shall, with one heart, worship at the Father's footstool!

I am aware that it has been said :—

> "East is East, and West is West; and never the twain
> shall meet";

but, as an old Indian, I beg leave to correct the text and read :—

> "East is East, and West is West; and yet the twain shall
> meet,
> And Eastern men join Western men in fellowship
> complete."

The hopeful words quoted above refer chiefly to the young men of India—the educated, who can read regarding the work and character of the blessed Redeemer. These already amount to a million of men, and the number steadily increases. But what about the uneducated masses?

I ask with the Apostle: "How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Some have heard, and the result is cheering; but the multitudes have not heard, save in a few cases.

Therefore let us "redeem the time." Let us make up as far as we can for past de-

ficiencies by double diligence in time to come. Let us press on with all our various Missions—evangelistic, educational, medical and female.

I would earnestly entreat the Missions that work for India unitedly to enter into a solemn covenant, that, so far as in them lies, they will secure that within a definite period—say ten years—every inhabitant of India shall have an opportunity of hearing of Christ and His salvation. As yet we have only one missionary—including those of all Christian races and denominations—to about 70,000 heathen. Does this content us?

The enlargement of heart—the devotion of heart—that this enlarged effort would bring would come on the languid Church with surprise, and would bear her rejoicingly and victoriously onward. Missions would not then be regarded only as a duty; they would be taken up as a delight. And then too the Church would do—what she never has done as yet—she would earnestly lay to heart and solemnly ponder the great commission and command: "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Surely the call is magnificent; it is an inspiring battle-cry; it ought to make every one of us a hero.

The Church would then take up the question, as a practical and pressing matter, how the Saviour's will can best, in all its glorious fulness, be speedily carried out. Then would it be seen that, all along, the great difficulty in Missions has been not with the heart of the heathen, but with the heart of the Church; and as Chrysostom long ago exclaimed, "Ah, there would soon be no heathen, if we were such Christians as we ought to be." For, when the heart of the Church is right, the arm of omnipotence is free to work. Then the impossible, is impossible no more. Then mountains sink to plains; and "a nation can be born in a day." "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

And now in conclusion let me ask what hope there is of our country rising to the high occasion. In connection with the International Conference of the Students' Volunteer Missionary Union valuable information has lately been given, and very earnest appeals have been made, on which we doubt not the blessing of God will largely rest. The single fact that there are now throughout the world many thousands of such student volunteers preparing to be

missionaries is a new departure which is full of significance and full of promise.

The watchword of this great International Union is "the evangelisation of the world in this generation." Is that language presumptuous? I do not think so. Let us remember that, while conversion is the work of God, evangelisation belongs to man.

Our blessed Redeemer knew the meaning of His own words when He gave the great commission already quoted, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"; and in this connection He added, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In proportion as the great command is obeyed, so is the glorious promise fulfilled. We dare not separate these two things. In proportion as the Church strives to preach to every creature, in that very proportion will she realise the Saviour's blissful presence and support.

"In *this* generation." It does not follow that the sublime work of evangelising the world could have been performed in any, or every, generation. Even the Apostles, with all their consuming zeal, could not have evangelised the world in their generation. They had to begin

the work, with eye and heart fixed on the final issue, and to labour on with full assurance of success towards the glorious final consummation.

Nineteen centuries have passed. The Church has grown immensely in numbers. It is a most solemn question: Could she accomplish the sublime work now in a generation? Those who have most carefully studied the facts and figures answer Yes. I need not quote the figures; but I am convinced these justify this opinion as to the Church's power. If I mistake not, there are twenty-five millions of communicants in our Protestant churches alone. Now, if these churches were all inspired with such zeal as animates the Moravians—who send to the heathen field at least one in sixty of their number—we should have a mighty host of missionaries; and the blessed consequence would be that by and by all our churches would rejoice, as the Moravians do, in converts from Paganism three times more numerous than the members of the churches are at home.

Let the churches then embark heart and soul in this new Crusade! It is higher and holier far than that of the old Crusades. Of

them I have no wish to speak slightingly. When Palestine fell under the power of the Muhammadans, it sent a chill to the heart of Christendom; and prince and peasant were alike eager to rescue at all hazards the holy land from the grasp of the infidel. And the Crusaders performed wonders. They met the Saracen hosts when these were flushed with victory; they rolled back the tide of invasion; and they established on the far-off plains of Asia a kingdom that did no disgrace to the proud name of European valour.

But this new Crusade is higher and better far, and it is expressly enjoined by Christ Himself.

There has been of late a steady rise of missionary feeling in our home churches. Certainly when we look back to the days when the admirable Carey mourned with a breaking heart over the coldness of Christians in obeying Christ's parting command, there has been a vast increase of evangelistic zeal; and there are many indications that we shall welcome a still larger one ere long. So let us plead, and so let us expect!

LECTURE SECOND

HINDUISM

SOMEWHAT less than four thousand years ago the early Hindus—the Āryas, as they called themselves—had penetrated by the passes of the Himalaya mountains into north-western India. Of their previous history their books contain no account whatever. They seem to have been partly an agricultural, but chiefly a pastoral, people. They had been in close contact with the Iranians, the ancient Persians, and were connected more remotely with the Greeks and Romans. The Āryas were a gifted, energetic and warlike race. They consisted probably of several tribes.

They found the country already occupied by an entirely different people, of darker complexion, but not savages. War speedily ensued, and was carried on probably on both sides, but certainly on that of the Āryas—as is shown in the hymns—with what we must

call ferocity.[1] The Āryas were generally victorious, and they steadily pushed on and on. They reduced the original inhabitants to slavery—driving those who would not yield into the wilder parts of the country.

The original inhabitants were called *dasyu* by the invaders—who scoffed at them as "noseless, speechless, and godless"—words which merely imply smaller noses, a non-Aryan language, and a religion unlike that of their enemies.

The early Hindus were decidedly a devout people. Their ideas seem to us very strange; but, from the beginning, and during their long history, they have manifested a deep sense of the superhuman and the unseen.

So long as the Āryas remained in the neighbourhood of the Himalayas—the highest mountains of the world—those stupendous masses must have greatly deepened the feeling in minds which were generally of quick sensibility. Almost everything to them was wonderful; and a feeling of awe and reverence, scarcely distinguishable from worship, must have been continually called forth. The

[1] Here is one passage out of a multitude equally fierce: "Hurl thy hottest thunderbolts upon them! Uproot them! Cleave them asunder! O Indra, overpower, subdue, slay the demons."

exceedingly vast—the exceedingly beautiful—the exceedingly terrible—all were regarded as superhuman, and all were adored.

We draw our conceptions of early Hinduism from its most ancient Scriptures—the Vedas. These are four in number; but the first is especially important. It is called the Rig Veda—"the Veda of praise"—and comprises rather more than a thousand hymns. These were probably collected at least six hundred years B.C.—having been composed at various dates during a considerable time preceding.

The religion was not idolatry in the sense of image-worship. It was nature-worship. The heavens, the sun, the dawn, the fire, the winds, the waters—these were the chief objects invoked. But their view of nature was not ours. It was exceedingly difficult for the early Hindu to think of natural objects as *dead*. The flowing stream, the rushing wind, the blazing fire: these all appeared instinct with life. In other cases in which life was not so obvious, the visible object was believed to be animated by an internal something—call it spirit or god.

The gods were named *deva* or the "bright ones."

In the Rig Veda the two most prominent deities are Agni and Soma; though it does not follow that they were so from the beginning of Hinduism.

Agni (the Latin *Ignis*) was a being of great importance. He never indeed ceased to be the god whom they had so wonderfully called forth by friction out of two pieces of wood; but he dwelt also in heaven, in the sun and the lightning; he was a subtle power pervading all things, ever ready to leap even out of the black hard rock. A vast mythology sprang up regarding this marvellous deity.

Soma was hardly less wonderful. He never indeed ceased to be the yellow liquid which they had crushed out of a particular plant. But he was not confined to earth. He was present in the gladdening rain. And where was he not? He was intoxicating, and therefore dear to men and gods: indeed the gods had become immortal by drinking of him. What could not such a being accomplish for his worshippers? It really seems as if the wildest visions they saw when under the power of intoxication had been accepted, as realities by those old singers.

Not by any means so prominent as these

two deities, but still greatly admired and loved was Ushas, the Dawn. In this case we welcome a sense of the glory of nature, which unfortunately does not very often appear in the Vedas. Ushas was not only praised as beneficent; she was also admired as supremely beautiful. Yes, the Dawn, with her far-streaming radiance, coming back from the land of mystery, bright, unchangeably young, and scattering the terrors of night before her—she was immortal, glorious, divine.

In the Rig Veda an exceedingly high position is ascribed to Varuna. This name is probably the same, etymologically, as the Greek *οὐρανός*, heaven. It is almost certain that, at an earlier period, the place assigned to Varuna was higher still,—that indeed he was the supreme divinity. A mysterious presence, a mysterious power, and a mysterious knowledge, are all ascribed to him. When two are in company, he is the third. He loves good and hates evil; he rewards the good and punishes the evil. He is the god of the pure, serene, distant heaven; and yet he is not far from any one of us.

You ask, Was Varuna the visible heaven, or an invisible being presiding over it? The

ancient Hindu hardly distinguished between the two conceptions. His mind, when it did not combine the two ideas into one, oscillated between them.

Varuna appears to have retained his supremacy as long as the Āryas were only in the northern Punjab. But by and by they spread to the territory watered by the Jumna and Ganges, and here he was superseded by the tumultuous Indra, the god of the atmosphere—the region of cloud and storm. The awful purity of Varuna had become oppressive; his votaries almost trembled as they approached him; and they were not unwilling to forget him. But it was a deplorable fall when men began to say, "The haughty Indra takes precedence of all the gods." To him no high attributes are ascribed. "Thy intoxication," it is said, "O Indra, is most intense." "Impetuous as a bull," he rushes to the place "where the liquor flows," and he drinks it "like a thirsty stag." That rational men should have forsaken the god of heaven for such a being as this may seem incredible. How could it have come about? The climatic conditions under which they lived in the Gangetic valley were chiefly these: there were three great seasons

—the cold, the hot, and the rainy. Towards the end of the hot season the heat was terribly trying. All living creatures—all nature—languished. Water-courses dried up; cattle died in large numbers. The suffering people looked up into the sky. There are the clouds floating from the ocean, laden with the life-giving waters; but they move on, driven by demons who wish to chain them in the recesses of the mountains. A most tantalising sight! The people call on Indra, the god of the air, pouring out to him large libations of the liquor which both he and they love so well; and lo! soon the lightning-flash is seen. That is Indra hurling his thunderbolts against the cloud-compelling demons. The thunder roars, ah! that is the demon, struck, and howling as he flies away. Then the blessed waters rush down to earth; and man and beast and tree and flower and all nature are filled with life and joy. For this the Hindus thought themselves indebted to the god of the atmosphere.

The hymns are not generally marked by primitive simplicity; they are often laboured and artificial—the voice of a dull priest rather than that of a gifted singer.

The hymns of every Veda are called Sanhitā.

To the Sanhitā there is added the Brāhmana, which is in prose, and was evidently written much later than the hymns. Its subject is the application of the hymn to the ritual. Added to the Brāhmana come generally the Aranyakas, or forest-treatises—written for the ascetics (who generally lived in the woods) doubtless at a later time. Finally come what are called the Upanishads. It is in these we see the origin of Hindu philosophy. Speculation becomes very prominent in these books; ritual is barely mentioned. The Upanishads are very numerous: but only ten or twelve of them are especially important. Part of them is in verse; indeed, instead of philosophic thought, they often give us poetical rhapsodies. Out of them were developed by degrees the six methodised systems of philosophy. The doctrine of the Upanishads is pantheistic; and nothing can be more complete than the change from the ceremonialism of earlier times to the speculation of these books. The importance which they attach to *knowledge* is simply unbounded.

I have been speaking of the Rig Veda.

The second of the four Vedas, the Sāma Veda, contains very little independent matter,

being nearly all extracted from the Rig Veda. It was intended especially for those who chanted the sacred texts.

The third or Yajur Veda contains a great assemblage of sacrificial formulæ. Evidently it was not produced in the Punjab but considerably to the east of it, probably in the district of Sirhind. The change of view from that of earlier times is very considerable. Snake-worship now appears. The rites have multiplied. In the earlier books the eye of the worshipper was directed mainly to the gods; now the gods are hardly mentioned, and ceremonies are greatly multiplied. Devotion has almost become sorcery. There was a considerable measure of this even in the earlier books; now, it is nearly all in all. This goes on increasing, until an entirely different kind of thought arises, which appears in the various philosophical schools.

The fourth Veda, the Atharva, is next in importance to the first. There is a great contrast between the Rig Veda and the Atharva; morally the latter is immensely the inferior.

The Atharva was accepted at a considerably later date than the other, but was never quite

universally acknowledged. The divinities in it are approached with dread; they are generally demons; and the prayer is a deprecation of their wrath. The book is full of magical incantations and charms for the destruction of enemies, the attainment of wealth, and so on. The book overflows with sorcery. Talismans and plants are supposed to be possessed of irresistible power to kill or heal.

If each of these two books represents the belief of the age in which it was collected, the corruption of religion must have gone on with a rapidity to which we can hardly find a parallel. But probably the Atharva presents the religion of the lower and larger class.[1]

As the Āryas advanced into the territories of the aborigines, they adopted not a few of their beliefs and rites. The aborigines were mainly of Turanian, that is Tartar, descent; and they were devoted to the worship of malignant deities, with rites correspondingly dark and cruel. Some of the gods of the Rig Veda, as we have seen, were low enough; still, they were not demons. But a base

[1] Some would say that the Atharva contains an older form of the religion, though its hymns were later in being collected. We hardly think so.

demon-worship ere long became a part of Hinduism.

But we must by no means overlook the worship of the dead. Quite distinguishable from the *devas* or gods are the *pitris* or fathers (*patres* in Latin). In later writings they are distinguished from men, as having been created separately; but this is not said in the Vedas. Yama, the offspring of the sun and the first of mortal men, traversed the road by which none returns: and he now drinks the Soma in the innermost part of heaven, surrounded by the other Fathers. These also come along with the gods to the banquets prepared for them on earth, and sitting on the sacred grass, rejoice in the exhilarating draught.

Darmesteter holds that the religion of the Indo-European race, while still united, "recognised a supreme God, an organising God, almighty, omniscient, moral, who was originally the god of heaven." (*Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1879.) Roth had previously written acutely and learnedly to the same effect.

There is one prayer (so called) which is pre-eminently holy. It is usually called—from the metre in which it is composed—the Gāyatú. It may be thus rendered:

Let us meditate on the excellent glory of the divine sun (or Vishnu); may he enlighten our understandings!

The worship paid to the gods by the Āryas consisted of prayer and praise—which were frequently, perhaps generally, accompanied by offerings. One great offering was melted butter, poured on the fire, so that it blazed high, bearing the supplications and the essence of the offering to the gods. Another frequent offering was the Soma—the fermented and intoxicating juice of a plant called *Asclepias acida*.

Bloody sacrifices were frequent. Sheep, goats, bullocks, cows, and buffaloes were offered. But the grand ceremony was the Aśvamedha—the sacrifice of the horse. In later days, when this sacrifice went on for years and when sometimes a hundred horses were offered, the potency of the rite was held to be irresistible; and, if the worshipper desired it, it was one of the most powerful means that could be used to cause the throne of the mightiest deities to totter.

The sacrifice of human beings was rare, and hardly approved. It was called "the way of the Sudras"—that is, of the conquered

races; from whom it had been probably derived. It was gradually and slowly abandoned.

It is not easy to state the conceptions which the early Hindus connected with sacrifice. We see no evidence that the offering supplied a meal or feast of which both deity and devotee partook; and there could be no such idea when human sacrifices were offered. In most cases, however, the offerings were believed to gratify and nourish the deities. Thus Agni (Ignis), the fire-god, is said to be "fed abundantly with butter;" and it was always with intense delight that Indra quaffed the exhilarating Soma juice.

Steadily the complexity of the rites increased till the ritual became the most elaborate that ever existed. The importance of the Brāhman—the man of prayer—increased in proportion. The ancient language was less and less understood by the common people: but absolute exactness in the pronunciation of every syllable and letter of the prayer was indispensable, otherwise a curse instead of a blessing might descend on the head of the worshipper. Ere long only the man of prayer could properly repeat the words, which had

gradually become a magical spell, an incantation. In no country has sacerdotalism ruled so despotically as in India, all through its history.

The offerings were generally eucharistic, *i.e.*, thanksgivings. There were also expiatory offerings, or atonements;—and much importance was attached to these. We may well study the darkly mystic utterances of those old books, which even speak of a divine being as offered in sacrifice. "The nave of the world-wheel"—that which upholds the order of the universe, was believed to be the ancient, mysterious, awful rite of sacrifice.

There were no temples. A space was marked out in which worship was performed. Each man worshipped for himself: there was no public worship in our sense. By and by the higher rites became possible only to the wealthy.

It would seem that every chief had a *purohita*, or domestic chaplain, who was qualified to pronounce the sacred texts exactly. But there were also domestic rites—performed by, or for, the householder and his wife.

The number of the gods is not clearly stated. It is often said to be thirty-three. There is often a confounding of deities, as if

they were different names of the same personage. Among these are a few female divinities; but, except the Dawn, these are not much regarded. In later times, however, they became much more important. The early deities are not exactly immoral; indeed the Veda generally speaks in accordance with the dictates of the natural conscience.

The Rig Veda believes in the soul of man as distinct from the body, and separable from it. At death the soul travels by the path which was trodden by the forefathers. The good soul is introduced "into the innermost of heaven," where Yama, the ancestor of the human race, banquets with the divinities; and the soul shares the delights of heaven. These, though not impure, are coarse and earthy,—the stimulating Soma drink entering largely into them. What comes of the wicked is not clearly stated: some passages would almost imply that they are annihilated. So in the Rig Veda, at least. In the Atharva Veda they are said to be consigned to dismal, gloomy pits. In the early books this subject is not much dwelt upon. It is otherwise, however, in the later books, and a hell of suffering is in them clearly stated.

The Hindus have no historical sense, and the dates we can give to their writings are largely conjectural. The period—during which the ideas of the Rig Veda were generally those of at least the higher people—seems to terminate about the year 500 B.C. It had lasted rather less than a thousand years—at least 800.

The people were doubtless still divided into septs or clans, quite capable of attacking each other, yet retaining a sense of unity from their common ancestry, language and customs. In several respects they resembled our Highland clans in their mutual relations.

The Hindus of all grades always speak of the Veda as the foundation and authoritative support of their religion; they seldom seem to be aware how vast a difference exists between that system as it was in ancient days and as it is now. There has been large growth from within and large accretion from without. Modern Hinduism is not a creed, but a vast congeries of conflicting creeds. Great philosophical systems have also been thought out; and there is an assemblage of such works, which are held to be possessed of a large measure of inspiration. To these we

shall refer before we close. There are also 18 Puranas, which are sacred and fully authoritative.

But after Buddhism arose and spread widely there was a great reconstruction of Hinduism.

1. Many of the old gods now disappeared and a multitude of new ones came in; and they are still continuing to come.

2. New doctrines were introduced, for example, that of Transmigration. We cannot say whether this important belief arose spontaneously or was borrowed from the aborigines.

No doctrine has impressed the general mind of India more deeply than this. A man's birth and condition in the world are held to depend on his previous character. The succession of births is, to every man, virtually endless. The soul is born into the body of a man, or a beast, or a fish, a reptile, an insect, a plant, or a stone—for even stones have souls. This belief fills the Hindu with the gloomiest apprehensions; he thinks of the horror of tenanting the body of a tiger or a loathsome creature like a snake, a toad or a worm! And only when the soul truly knows itself—that is, knows itself to be

one with God—can the hideous process finally cease.

3. Another novelty is the practice of pilgrimage, *i.e.*, visiting holy places. We can trace this from about 200 B.C. Rivers had begun to be held in great reverence; and gradually all India came to be covered with *tirthas*—*i.e.* holy places—on their banks. We trace them from the Himalayas, south to Cape Comorin, and from the extreme west of India to the extreme east. Very popular are the sacred places along the Ganges from the point where it breaks out from the Himalaya mountains, down to the spot where it mingles with the sea. The holy places along the Ganges are visited at certain recurring times by more than a million—occasionally by nearly two millions of devotees. Perhaps the most celebrated place of all is Puri, in Orissa, where there is the famous, or infamous, temple of Juggernaut (Jagannāth), literally, *the lord of the world.*

The idea is that by bathing in a sacred stream all sin is washed away; and much merit is acquired by the toils of the journey, which often extends to several hundreds of miles. Doubtless one reason for the popularity of

pilgrimage—which is more attractive to women than to men—is that it breaks in on the terrible monotony of Indian life. But the evils connected with it are exceedingly great. In Calcutta I found husbands and fathers strongly opposed to the wishes of their female relatives to go to Puri or elsewhere; and one great cause of their reluctance was that, when the caged bird once escaped, it often could not, or would not, find its way back again. Indeed, the perils of pilgrimage are always great and manifold, as also are the moral evils connected with it.

4. It was mentioned that the early Hindus had no image-worship. When the natural object—the fire or stream—was before their eyes, images were out of the question. But a love of symbolism was deep in the Aryan mind from the first; and in later days perhaps the most outwardly striking characteristic of Hinduism is idolatry. Idols, idols everywhere. They are found all over the land by millions. They are of stone or metal—brass being most frequently used—and sometimes of wood. They are of all sizes—from the gigantic to the most diminutive—each idol is generally bright and glaring, being smeared over with the

sacred vermilion colour. Trees also, and any remarkable masses of rock, are marked in the same way; indeed, any object may be so—especially any thing grand, beautiful, terrible, or repulsive. A distinguished French author, Bossuet, I think, said of the Greeks and Romans: *Tout était Dieu, excepté Dieu lui-même;* and the words are equally true of the modern Hindus.

5. Even so, temples which, as we saw, were at first unknown, are now numberless: temples of all sizes,—some beautiful, many much the reverse. There is only one divine being to whom in all India no temple is ever reared! I often put the question: "Where in your town is the temple of the Supreme Being?" The answer was an expression of amazement at the question. "Temple of the Supreme? there is no such temple." "Why not?" I asked: and the instant reply was—"Because He is present everywhere." "Most true," was my rejoinder, "but surely you could meet to worship Him." I cannot remember that any Hindu ever acknowledged the suggestion to be reasonable. It was heard always with surprise—sometimes with scorn. This fact of itself reveals the abyss that separates the Christian mind from the Hindu.

6. Another very important innovation is that of Caste. Society is now divided into a countless number of sections separated from each other as by insurmountable iron walls.[1]

We saw that in early days the Brāhman "the man of prayer," was slowly climbing towards the pre-eminence which he was to maintain for more than two thousand years, and which has not been entirely lost even yet; but, as time went on, the number of castes multiplied and the rules regulating them became more and more stringent. Caste observances are determined with a view to preserving religious purity. The greater part of a Hindu's duty is contained in obeying the fixed restrictions as to eating and drinking. A man may believe what he pleases, and act almost as he pleases; and yet, if he keeps caste rules, he is an orthodox Hindu. The laws of caste are often as absurd as they are tyrannical. Thus into the city of Poona, under the Native Government, no low caste man was allowed to enter before 9 o'clock A.M., or to remain after 3 P.M. Why? Because,

[1] Sir Henry Sumner Mayne—who knew India well—characterized caste as the most desolating and blighting of all institutions.

before nine and after three he cast too long a shadow; and wherever that shadow fell upon a Brāhman it polluted him, so that he dared not taste food or water until he had bathed and washed the impurity away. So, also, no low caste man was allowed to live in a walled town. Cattle and dogs could freely enter and remain: but not the Mhār or Māng.

Under a Muhammadan or Christian government such laws were of course swept aside; but up to this day in some Native states inhuman restrictions continue. Unless things have changed very recently, caste still rules with iron sway in the kingdom of Travancore, in Southern India.[1]

7. One truly remarkable change that has taken place in Hinduism is the cessation of animal sacrifice. In early Hinduism the rite of sacrifice went on steadily increasing for many centuries, the victims becoming more numerous and the ritual more complex. The Brāhmanas (Treatises appended to the Hymns of the Veda)—composed probably from 1000 to 800 B.C.—amaze us by the extent to which the sacrificial system was carried, far exceeding

[1] Somewhat more independence of caste customs has been shown of late by the Travancore Government.

that of any other religion. Blood, blood, everywhere and always. The philosopher Hegel characterized the Hindu mind as *maasslos*, *i.e.* measureless. That quality is seen in the early sacrificial system as clearly as anywhere. And yet, for nearly 2000 years it has completely disappeared. It is usual to ascribe its termination to Buddhism, which arose in the fifth century B.C. Vast doubtless was the effect of Buddhism. But Buddha seems often only to have given full, clear utterance to ideas that were rising in many minds. Buddhism was largely an unavoidable reaction from extreme sacerdotalism.

Animal sacrifice has not indeed ceased in India, and horrid spectacles are exhibited, especially at Kālighāt in Calcutta; but these are no survival of the Vedic rites; they are relics of the savage aboriginal worship.

8. Another great innovation is the doctrine of the Avătārs, or incarnations of Vishnu; of which there are generally said to be ten. The word means *descent.* The avatars are the descents from heaven of a divine being desiring to mingle in the affairs of human life. The original conception is a striking and touching one; the human heart craved

the sympathy and support of a celestial being. The old Vedic gods did not supply the want; there was little in common between them and struggling human beings.

But while we recognise the touching truth of the original conception, we are startled by the fantastic forms which the incarnations assume. The deity becomes first a fish, who plunges into the deep to rescue *Manu*, the ancestor of the human race, and seven holy men with him, from the universal deluge. I will not weary you by a full statement of the other incarnations. One or two references will suffice. In the sixth, Rāma with the Axe is said to have annihilated the whole of the Kshatriya caste when they sought to domineer over the Brāhmans. This doubtless points to a great struggle between the two highest castes, in which the Brāhmans were victorious. In the ninth descent Vishnu became Buddha, for the purpose of inculcating error! The acceptance of his teaching sent men to hell. There is not a more dreadful conception in all Hinduism than this. The incarnate Deity teaching damnable error! Yet this was the means the Brāhmans devised to prevent the people from becoming Buddhists!

Another fearful practice was the burning of widows on the same funeral pile with their husbands. There is no authority for this in the Veda; but probably the rite had existed for at least 2000 years; and the murdered women must have amounted to millions. We know that from the battle of Plassey, which gave Britain the sovereignty of Bengal in 1756, to 1829, when the inhuman rite was suppressed, no fewer than 70,000 widows were thus burnt to death. The Brāhmans vehemently opposed the suppression of the dreadful custom; they declared that it was commanded in their sacred book; and to prove this, they corrupted the text, as Horace Wilson and other scholars have fully shown. Under the influence of the Brāhmans even a rebellion seemed imminent; but happily the British Government stood firm. When I went to India in 1838 the rite still existed in several Native states; and I well remember the horror I felt when we heard of the burning alive of nine women along with the corpse of old Runjit Singh, the "Lion of the Punjaub." But such deeds of darkness are possible no longer. Even Hindu opinion would now hardly tolerate the enormity.

But a great change is still required in the treatment of women. Marriages are often ridiculously early. Recent statistics show that in Bengal there were 433 widows under one year of age. No widow of the higher castes can yet re-marry. Her hair must be cut off; she must be stripped of all her ornaments and never appear at any family rejoicing; for the curse of heaven is on her, and she would bring that curse with her if she mingled with the rest. No wonder if it has been said that the old practice of widow-burning would have been less dreadful than is their treatment now. That would have been a brief torture; this is life-long torture. No doubt the hearts of fathers and mothers often protest against the custom, but the cruelty, though not now universal, is still general.

It may be well to state how worship is performed. Let me describe it as it is conducted over the Maratha country in Western India. There is an officiating priest at every temple. He is not properly a Brāhman. He is called the Gurava. He washes the idol every morning by pouring water over it, puts a red pigment composed of sandal wood and oil on

its forehead, ornaments it with flowers, and strews flowers round about it. He sweeps the temple, then cleans it by smearing it every seven or eight days with cow-dung; and every night lights a lamp, or several lamps, before the image.

The image is often visited by other inhabitants of the village, particularly Brāhmans. They pour water over it and offer prayers to it.

This is the public worship. What about family worship? In all respectable houses there is an apartment called "the gods' house" —a chapel, say—in which the images are kept, ranged for the most part in rows. Almost always there is a special family idol, a tutelary god or goddess, which has been worshipped in the house perhaps for generations. A priest comes in the morning, enters the chapel, takes down the deities, bathes them in a pail of water, takes them out one by one, dries them well, sets them up again in their places, anoints them with red pigment, and offers certain prayers. He receives a fee for his trouble. Or the homage may be rendered by the eldest son of the family, if his theological knowledge enable him to do it properly. The male members of the family then pray separately

to the idols. The women and children generally place a few flowers on or near the deities and set some fruits before them.

What do our readers think of all this? To us, as we write it down, it is a pathetic spectacle. The homage is sincere; but the deities are of brass or iron.

A great change in the Vedic life was the rise and rapid growth of speculation. The early period had been a stirring one. War had been frequent, especially against the "black skin," as the aborigines were called. But by and by, the Aryan supremacy was secured, and there was time to reflect. The race pressed down the valley of the Ganges into warmer regions: and the requirements of life were more easily met. The country was then largely covered with forests; probably there was a wood in sight of every settlement. In the East there is something very attractive about life "under the greenwood tree." The deep shade mitigates the glare and heat of day. Rain comes in the fixed rainy season—seldom at other times. All those who were disposed for thought rather than action, were easily led to choose a forest sanctuary. These

men would be almost exclusively Brāhmans. By, and for, such recluses were composed a number of "Forest Treatises," of which the most important parts are the Upanishads. There are about 240 of these—twelve of which are specially important.

They have been styled "guesses at truth," and no doubt the guesses are often far astray. Professor Whitney calls them "the purest twaddle." But there is generally sincerity in the Upanishads, and sometimes earnestness. There is also often a childlike confession of ignorance,—everything seems so wonderful in earth and heaven. Another almost universal characteristic is—pessimism—a despairing, or at least desponding, view of human life.

The tone of these writings is prevailingly pantheistic. When one recollects the mob of gods that jostle one another in Hinduism it may seem strange to speak of pantheistic Hinduism. Yet it is not so strange. The very multiplication of gods proves that the Hindu has a deep sense of a divine something as everywhere diffused. Well, if all Nature is divine, then every part of it is divine, and may be worshipped. That of course is not just the same thing as setting up stocks and stones;

but the Hindu generally points out the holiness of any spot either by a mark or an image. Hinduism is thus to be characterised either as a polytheistic pantheism or a pantheistic polytheism.

Philosophy enters deeply into Hinduism; and it is high time that reference should be made to the subject. Anything like a full discussion of it in these lectures is quite out of the question; I should weary you to death if I undertook it. All that I can now attempt is to state the outlines of one or two of the leading systems of Indian thought.

Let me remind you that ritualism had gone on steadily extending long before speculation began. In the Rig Veda the only attempt to philosophise appears in one or two of the latest hymns.

Reference has already been made to the Upanishads, the treatises appended to the Veda, as being mainly pantheistic in tendency. Indian philosophy was finally methodized or arranged into six leading systems which greatly conflict with one another on fundamental questions. But on the whole what may be called the reigning philosophy is the Vedānta. This name means *the end of the Vedas*;—though as-

suredly it is not the end to which the Vedas naturally conduct us.

A short statement of this philosophy is found in the Vedānta Sāra (Kernel of the Vedānta), which was probably composed about 800 A.C. It distinctly asserts that the Vedānta philosophy is drawn from "the Upanishads and works the auxiliary thereto." No mention is made of the Vedas in this connection.

A learned writer has said of the Vedānta philosophy, "such a system, even if it be perfectly comprehensible, cannot be represented by language." The words are not encouraging either to you or me; but let us all do our best to understand the doctrine.

"The soul and God (Brāhmă) are one: to show this is the scope of all Vedānta treatises," so says the Vedānta Sāra. A great Upanishad says that there was in the beginning "only one without a second" (or in Latin *unum, non secundum*, both adjectives in the neuter gender.)

The following verse is very well known:—

I sum up in half a couplet of ten million books the sense,—
God is real, world unreal, soul is God and none beside.

There are two great sentences continually quoted; *Tat twam, i.e. That art thou*, and *Aham Brāhma, i.e. I am God.*

God is the sole reality. All else is only appearance; it seems, but is not. Its seeming existence is owing to ignorance, otherwise called illusion. God and Ignorance are two eternal existences.

This last assertion is in direct contradiction to the fundamental belief that God alone exists. But as has been often shown, the Vedānta is far from self-consistent.

Ignorance is possessed of two powers—Envelopment and Projection. The former conceals from the soul its identity with God; the latter power projects the appearance of an external world.

There are four conditions of the soul; being awake, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and a fourth state which is beyond dreamless sleep. When awake a man is grossly ignorant of reality; asleep and dreaming, he is freed from a portion of this ignorance; when asleep without dreams, he is still farther freed. But the consummation is the fourth state. Thus the world that appears around us is an entire illusion; the world seen in dreams is less so.

True knowledge therefore is the grand requisite. "He who knows what soul is gets beyond grief." "He who knows God becomes

God."[1] "When He the first and the last has been discerned, then one's own acts are annihilated."[2]

Throughout we have the strongest possible assertions; but of proof, of evidence, not a tittle.

It is remarkable how writers—poets especially of unquestioned orthodoxy, can unconsciously slip into the language of pantheism. Thus Wordsworth—

> "Thou, Thou alone,
> Art everlasting and the blessed spirits
> Which Thou includest as the sea her waves."

But Indian Pantheism is a fixed belief, calmly and coldly stated.

In connection with the Vedānta we may notice the Yoga system. The term Yoga properly means concentration. The Yoga professes to seek union with God. Some Hindus assert that the higher form of Yoga is a true and lofty philosophy fitted to lead the human soul into true union with the divine.

There are eight means of mental concentration — which again, with the usual supersubtlety of India, are amplified into eighty-four. One may say that the Yogis expect to become

[1] Vedānta Sāra, 18. [2] *Ibid.*, 143.

divine by ceasing to be human. They employ the most unnatural and painful postures, contortions of the limbs, suppression of the breath, and so forth. The effort is not only to become divine, but to be possessed of supernatural powers. The Yogi—generally a most repulsive object in outward appearance—professes to work miracles; the credulous multitude believe him, and supply his bodily wants. The man in time becomes an expert conjurer and can play wonderful tricks.[1]

Though Europeans who have seen the Yogis are always ready to express disgust with them and their professions, it is right to remember that the principle of asceticism is so deeply implanted in the Indian mind that the Yogi may be a believer in his own supernatural powers, as well as in his desire for union with the divine. In India I could not help feeling that the spectacle of a fully developed Yogi was more painful, if possible, even than open idol-worship.

One is ready to exclaim that these are the dreams only of a few self-styled philosophers.

[1] In a book lately published—"The Mystics, Ascetics, and Saints of India—by J. C. Oman," we have representations of the astonishing attitudes these men assume.

But to a considerable extent they have penetrated the common mind. Often when I have asked, "Who is it that speaks in you?" the immediate answer has been, "God." And if I still asked, "But if the soul is God, how can a man tell lies?" the Hindu was puzzled to know how to answer, but would not surrender his belief.

This identification of God and the soul is surely, as Tennyson says, "a faith as vague as all unsweet." On intellectual, moral, and religious grounds it must be cast aside. The sole existence being God, Sin is non-existent. Even so, we are told that "he whose intellect is not confused, though he should kill, kills not." The murder is not real; it only *seems*.

Humility, a sense of dependence, reverence, prayer, obedience, repentance: these things are all impossible. Love either to God or our neighbour is equally so. Love *from* God is the same; for the poor Soul is alone in a loveless universe. The conception is appalling. So much for the Vedānta. Of the systems generally, I sum up in the words of Dr John Muir, a very learned Sanskrit scholar[1]:

[1] A native of Edinburgh and the very generous founder of the Sanskrit chair in Edinburgh University.

"The consistent followers of these systems can have no religion, no action, and no moral character." So Pundit Nilkanth Shastri states: "The effect on those persons who have a strong natural bias to vice is such that no excess of wickedness seems to them wrong."

Or, in the words of so tolerant a thinker as M. Cousin: "You comprehend that, God being all and man nothing, a formidable theocracy pressed upon humanity, taking from it all liberty, all movement, all practical interest, and consequently all morality." Such is the sorrowful result of infinite speculation. How awfully true are the Apostle's words, "The world by wisdom knew not God!"

Such then, briefly, is the higher pantheism of India. A much respected member of the Brãhma Samaj, Mr P. C. Mozoomdar, has said that "what Europeans call pantheism is a certain phase of eastern thought which they can never understand." That seems rather hard on us poor Europeans, who would fain hope that we can understand what is understandable. But we are sure that Mr Mozoomdar would reject as indignantly as we do, much that the pantheists of India teach. Thus, at the Parliament of Religions

held at Chicago a few years ago, the gentleman who had assumed the title of Swāmi Viveka Ananda had no hesitation in speaking as follows:—

"You are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. You, divinities on earth, sinners! It is a sin to call you so. It is a standing libel on human nature. The worst lie you ever told yourself was that you were a sinner and a wicked man."

These are amazing words. Is there throughout this wide world a single religion, except Hindu Vedantism, that would not repel with indignation such heaven-daring sentiments?

The students of Indian philosophy in India are generally Brāhmans; and these, as a rule, pay exceedingly little regard to any system of thought which is not Indian and in accordance with the great Sanskrit authorities. Educated men of other classes in a few cases may pay some attention to European—or at least English philosophy. Thus some years ago, the name of Mr Herbert Spencer was well known in India; his reputation as a thinker stood pretty high. Several educated Hindus would have called themselves his followers. Probably this

arose from a belief that his well-known doctrine regarding the "Unknowable" bore a resemblance to the Hindu teaching regarding the *parabrahma*. But the resemblance was wholly superficial. Mr Spencer maintained that the Supreme Being "must be conceived as certainly not less than personal;" whereas the Vedānta philosophy utterly denies the personality of the Supreme. Indeed, the Bhagavad-Gītā, one of the highest Indian authorities expressly declares that we cannot pronounce the Supreme to be either existent or non-existent. A state that is neither existence nor non-existence; let us hope that our Oriental friends can form some conception of such a condition. I fear we people of the West are incapable either of doing so, or of imagining that we can.

Mr Herbert Spencer also fully accepts the great conclusions of modern science; but these the Vedānta philosophy declares to be vain as the vainest dream—mere appearances "projected," as it says, "by ignorance or illusion."

Finally, it is surely a remarkable fact that while the great philosophies of Europe—the creations, some of them, of highly distinguished men—have hardly exerted any appreciable

influence on the ancient systems of Hindu speculation, the simple preaching of the Gospel—the doctrine of the Cross—has already told, and is every day telling, with increasing power, on the hoary creeds of the East. It seems, indeed, as if we were approaching the time foreshadowed in the days of John the Baptist's preaching, when crowds were pressing into the kingdom, or, in the words of our Lord Himself: when "the kingdom of heaven suffered violence and the violent took it by force."

Notes on Lecture Second

CASTE

is an institution which seems to have had no existence in any country but India.

Society is arranged in *strata* or layers, which are grounded on differences chiefly of occupation.

The classification is hereditary.

In the last Indian census report, three interesting views on the origin of caste are given. We quote the view of Mr Nesfield.

The Brāhman, or priest, set the example. He ruled that no one should hold the name or

status of a Brāhman unless of Brāhman parentage on both sides.

The military chieftain followed the same course. Then the upper working-classes did so. Then the artisans. And so on downward.

But though caste works tyrannically in all cases it varies immensely in its regulations in different places.

THE HINDU SECTS

as reconstructed after the fall of Buddhism about the end of the twelfth century. Hinduism is split into a multitude of what are called sects. These may generally be classed under two heads, the Vaishnava, or sects that hold Vishnu supreme, and the Śaiva, that so hold Siva.

We need not give more than the names of these.

The Vaishnava sects are:—

1. The Rāmanujyas.
2. The Rāmanandis.
3. The Vallabhachāryas.
4. The Mādhavāchāryas.
5. The followers of Chaitanya.
6. The followers of Swāmi Nārāyau.

The Śaiva sects are as follows :—

1. The Dandes, or staff-bearers.
2. The Yogis.
3. The Gangamas.
4. The Paramahansas.
5. The Aghoris.
6. The Urdhvabāhus.
7. The Akāśamukhis.

The sects have often, indeed generally, run into sad extravagance. But from time to time men of purer minds and higher aspirations have arisen, who have sought to purify religion.

When Muhammadanism appeared in India as an active, proselytising system, it compelled attention. The Arab merchants who visited the "pepper coast" of Malabar were often eager to proselytise. In particular their vehement assertion of the Divine unity and their stern denunciation of image-worship could not be heard without awakening thought.

One of the most influential teachers who were influenced by Islam was Kabîr, who flourished about the year 1400. The doctrine of the Divine unity had deeply impressed him, but he could never get rid of his early Hindu

beliefs regarding transmigration, the avatāras, and several other points. One high characteristic of Kabîr's teaching is its moral purity. It denounces caste, ridicules the Śāstras, and denounces Brāhmanical arrogance. Idolatry, it says, is sinful. The sect has spread widely over northern, western, and central India, and has somewhat powerfully affected Hindu thought.

A second reformer was Nānak, born in 1469. But perhaps I said enough of him and his followers the Sikhs in the introductory lecture. Let us by all means keep our eye on the Panjāb and its energetic, gallant people!

SANSKRIT MSS. IN JAPAN

The celebrated Chinese pilgrim Hinen Thsang, who visited India in the seventh century of our era, informs us that great numbers of MSS. were, at various times, carried from India into China, in connection with the missionary efforts of the Buddhists. His travels were made known to the European public by the French savant, Stanislas Julien, in 1853. Ever since that time the hope has been entertained that some of these ancient

documents, or at least copies of them, might yet be discovered in the farther East.

Professor H. H. Wilson did all in his power to stimulate the search for Sanskrit MSS. in China. (See Journal of Royal Asiatic Society for 1856.) China, however, has as yet furnished us with no Indian MSS. nor with copies of any such; though translations of Sanskrit works into Chinese exist in abundance.

In Japan the search has been more successful. Some time ago, Dr Edkins, the missionary, a well known Chinese scholar, transmitted to Professor Max Müller a small vocabulary of Sanskrit words, accompanied with a Chinese version and a transliteration into Japanese. Since that time the subject has attracted much attention. It was pointedly referred to at the late Oriental Congress in Berlin in 1881.

Dr Mitchell said he now laid on the table about thirty documents, great and small, which he had procured in Japan—mainly through the kind assistance of Mr (now Sir) E. M. Saton, Secretary to the British Legation at Tokio, and an accomplished Japanese scholar.

1. There were five specimens of Pali MSS. in Singalese character.

2. Two volumes contained copies of various Sanskrit MSS. and inscriptions found in Japanese monasteries and temples.

3. Twelve volumes were syllabaries and vocabularies.

4. Several were *dhāranis;* a specimen of Tântrika literature well known in Nepāl—consisting for the most part of magical formulæ.

Through the kind help of Bhagwan Lal Pandit and Shankar Pandurang Pandit he was able to supply a translation of the first and last pages of a MS. as they are copied in the first of the five volumes mentioned above. The MS. is on palm leaf. It is in possession of the Mikado. According to Bhagwan Lal Pandit, whose authority on such questions was very high, the MS. was probably written in Nepāl in the seventh or eighth century. The work is mentioned in W. Brian Hodgson's list of Sanskrit MSS. known in Nepāl. It is entitled *Ushnisha vijayā*—the next to the last line evidently reading thus—*ushnisha vijayā dhārani samapta*: that is, conclusion of the *ushnisha vijayā dhārani.* The ideas are in the most transcendental style of Buddhist metaphysics.

The words *siddham rastu* instead of *siddham*

astu, which frequently occur in these documents, show that no accurate knowledge of Sanskrit existed in Japan when they were written.

The numerous alphabets which are given are not by any means exact reproductions of each other, and probably belong to different eras.

The arrangement of the vowels and consonants is the same as in the Sanskrit alphabet. The *anusvâr* and *visarga* are included; but certain vowels and a compound consonant are sometimes omitted.

The combinations of the consonants often assume puzzling forms.

The powers of the letters are fully and elaborately stated in Chinese equivalents and generally in Japanese. In the vocabularies not only is the sense of the word given; but it is always divided into syllables, and the exact sound of each syllable is supplied—as far as Chinese and Japanese can do so.

The statement given above was read by me at a meeting of the Asiatic Society, Bombay, 20th Dec. 1881.

The *Bombay Gazette* of 9th Jan. 1882 thus refers to the matter:—

"Dr Mitchell exhibited a collection of

manuscripts and printed copies of manuscripts found in Japan, which excited the liveliest interest as our readers know. The suspicion, long entertained, that the Buddhist missionaries who from India carried their religion to the farthest corners of the East, must have left some permanent traces of their religion in Japan, has recently been verified; and Dr Mitchell is taking home with him a very complete collection made by order of the Japanese Government of copies of texts which are cherished with superstitious reverence in the temples of Japan. Not the least interesting among them are the alphabets and syllabaries in which the Devanagari character is set forth in forms that are perfectly recognisable, and which indeed in some cases preserve distinctions which have died out in the vernaculars of India."

DID HINDUISM BORROW FROM CHRISTIANITY?

This is a question of equal interest and difficulty. A full investigation would demand more time than we can spare, and to most of our readers would probably be tiresome. Still, it seems desirable that the leading points of the controversy should be mentioned.

When resemblances to Christian doctrines occur in Greek or Roman writers, we are not eager to say that the resemblance implies a *transference* of thought. Thus, it does not surprise us to find the thoughts of St Paul or St John not unfrequently similar to those of Plato. So, although Christianity and Hinduism stand in general very far apart, we are prepared to find occasionally coincidences between the two.

But when the coincidences are very numerous or very striking, it does suggest the question whether the one system may not have borrowed from the other.

The points of resemblance to Christianity that have suggested the question at the head of this note occur, for the most part, in the Bhagavad Gītā—the Song of the Holy One. This is a very remarkable composition, which is, in many respects, unlike other Hindu books.

Unhappily the date of its composition is uncertain. The Orientalists, Lassen and Weber, ascribe it to the third century after Christ. It is difficult to believe it earlier, but it may be considerably later. It has been thrust into the heart of that great collection, the Mahābhārata; but that it was originally a

part of it is very unlikely; for it forms a great interruption of the narrative. The age of the Mahābhārata itself is unknown; but as it speaks of the Yavanes[1]—probably the Greeks or Bactria—it is more modern than many of the other Hindu books.

The correspondence between the teaching of the Bible and the Bhagavad Gītā has been frequently referred to; but the most elaborate comparison of the two which we know was made by Dr Lorinser of Breslau in 1860, in a long appendix to his translation of the Gītā.

He quotes a passage in Chrysostom[2] which asserts that the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians and Ethiopians had translated into their own tongues the doctrines taught by Christ; and inasmuch as this is certainly true of the other nations mentioned, he reasonably asks why should we not hold it true of the Indians also? Chrysostom died in 407. If an Indian translation of the Bible or New Testament existed before his time it might have been probably made by the third century.

Lorinser does not mention that various

[1] Sarvajnā Yavanā rājan surāschaivā viśeshaṭak, *i.e.* Omniscient are the Greeks, O King, heroic men surpassingly.

[2] Gospel of John, Homil. Chap. i.

apocryphal Gospels were circulated in the East, chiefly among the Syrian Christians, from the third century onwards. Some of these attracted much notice, for example, the Gospel of the Infancy, in Arabic. Doubtless the canonical and apocryphal Gospels generally agreed in their main assertions of fact and doctrine.

Syrian Christians probably were in Southern India in considerable numbers by the year 250 or so. So far as we know there existed no unfriendly feelings between them and the Hindu inhabitants.

The Jews of Malabar also must be taken into account, though Dr Lorinser confines his attention to the connection between the Gītā and the New Testament. He gives a very large number of quotations. He comes to the conclusion that the supposition of a connection and a transference of thought is "almost certain."

On the whole, notwithstanding what Chrysostom says, as mentioned above, it is by no means clear that there was any version of the New Testament into an Indian language; but a connection between Christianity and Indian thought is at least probable.

It is exceedingly difficult for two religions to exist side by side for any considerable time without mutually affecting one another. No two systems seem more mutually repellent than Hinduism and Muhammadanism; yet the late census informs us that Hinduism has, in certain districts, powerfully affected the latter.

Hinduism—through its whole history—has been very impressionable. The Bhagavad Gītā itself is strongly eclectic and labours to harmonise three great conflicting systems of philosophy. The accomplished author would certainly be much struck by the teachings of Christianity if he knew them.

In addition to correspondences between the Gītā and the New Testament there are several things which appear to indicate an acquaintance with Christianity on the part of the Hindus. The Mahābhārata speaks of a "white island," and the worshippers of "one God" who dwelt there.

Again there is the doctrine of *bhakti* or *devotion*—affection fixed on God. This does not occur in early Hinduism. The Vedas speak often of *śraddhā* or trust in the gods; but they hardly recognise the emotional part of religion. The doctrine of *bhakti* comes in

abruptly. We think that, if not originally drawn from Christianity, it was developed by contact with it. The Hindus, ere long, carried the doctrine to very extravagant lengths.

The same thing might be said of the idea of the *guru* or religious teacher. It was probably borrowed from Christianity, but quickened by intercourse with Muhammadans.

The doctrine of the *Trimarti* must also be considered. There is said to be a triad of gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva. This conception does not appear at an early date—probably not till two centuries after Christ. The remarkable point is that the triad is after all a unity—Vishnu or Śiva almost including all the three deities. The doctrine does not harmonise with proper Hinduism, in which the three gods are quite distinct personalities, who often quarrel and fight together.

All we would say is that the conception is very like the thought of Hindus who had heard of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, but whose ideas of it were shadowy and inexact.

As the, conclusion, on the whole, remains doubtful, the connection should not be pressed in controversy. But two things crave attention.

First, as the Gītā stands alone and unapproachable among Hindu books there must have been some adequate cause of its immense superiority. Europeans generally may call this the extraordinary genius of the author of the Gītā and the Hindus attribute it to inspiration; but the probable explanation is that which we have given.

Secondly, it is a truly remarkable fact that by far the greatest and best of Indian books, which separates itself so far from ordinary Hinduism, comes, in its tone and spirit, so near to Christianity, if there was no *transference* of thought.

THE TANTRAS

We now briefly refer to a class of writings about which there is a diversity of opinion among Hindus. Some hold them in very high esteem: others reject them. They are very numerous; but only five or six are very well known.

They assumed the form of dialogues between Śiva and his wife. The goddess asks questions, and the god replies. The doctrines explained must be communicated only to the initiated.

They inculcate the worship of the śakti.

never to have occurred to them. Sir Monier Williams has said: "If a battle is described, millions of soldiers, elephants and horses are brought into the field, or, generally hundreds of millions." Sir Henry Sumner Maine observes —that Hindu books are "elaborately inaccurate; supremely and deliberately careless of all precision."

NOTE ON BENARES

One part of India differs so much from another that it is not possible to supply a succinct description which will serve for the whole. It may be well, however, to give a brief statement of the religious condition of Benares—the "holiest" city in India. Orthodoxy of the old and strictest school is still very powerful; the Sanskrit Śāstras maintain their place, and the Pandits teach what their fathers taught two thousand years ago. The Ārya Samāj has spread in the districts around, but has very slightly influenced the city. English and European learning are steadily advancing. Government education and Missionary education are telling powerfully. There has been for some years a "Theosophical" movement—with both a Sanskrit and an English department—

both energetically conducted. The great support of this movement has been an English lady, Mrs Besant, who must be possessed of some peculiar charm, or power of persuasion at least; for she has induced the Mahārājā of Benares and other rich Hindus to contribute large sums to the "Central Hindu College." Many scholarships have been founded; and in two or three years the students have become fully five hundred. We are not sufficiently acquainted with Mrs Besant's Theosophy to venture on explaining it; but one thing is certain, it is strongly, passionately, anti-Christian. Teachers, both male and female, have come from Europe to aid in the work; and we have no right to say that worldly gain attracts them, for their pay is small; indeed the Principal of the College and two other leading men receive no salary. So we have here the remarkable spectacle of educated men and women going forth from purely anti-Christian zeal. Farther, every effort was made to win the orthodox pandits—a temple was built to Sarasvati, and the image—elephant-headed—of Ganeśa set up over the entrance of the college. Several of the orthodox priests did join Mrs Besant's committee of management

for a short time; but very soon all but one resigned.

It should still be mentioned that toleration seems no part of theosophic teaching. One of the professors once accompanied his wife to church. He was immediately informed that, if such liberties were taken, he must resign his professorship.

This highest place of Indian idolatry, then, still holds out apparently as firmly as ever against the Gospel. But the Missions are not discouraged. An immense deal has been done especially by female and medical missions, and the faithful men and women hold on in calm assurance of final success.

THE BRĀHMA SAMĀJ

It is interesting to note the position which the Brāhma Samāj now occupies. In Max Müller's "Life and Letters" there is a letter of his nearly five pages long addressed to Mr P. C. Mozoomdar, in which he and his friends are earnestly exhorted to declare themselves Christians. Many of the leading members had frequently and strongly expressed their admiration of Christ; let them then, as a body, declare themselves His disciples. Mr Mozoomdar

declined to comply with the request, and the Samāj generally has remained as it was.

Max Müller makes no mention of baptism; and we cannot say whether he would have dispensed with the initiatory rite of the Christian Church. To us it appears indispensable, as prescribed by divine authority. But wholly apart from this, it is of the highest possible value. It is a test of true discipleship. As long as a Hindu inquirer remains unbaptised, he is held to be a good Hindu. Does he believe in Christ? What matters that? His caste is as pure as ever; and he goes in and out among his relatives and friends as before. At this moment multitudes of Hindus admire Christ—who, indeed, of pureminded men can do otherwise? But baptism alters the condition of things entirely. The baptised man is accounted an apostate; he is polluted and polluting. Thus, to be baptised is to take up Christ's Cross and follow Him through good report and bad report. This is a test of true discipleship, laid down by Christ Himself, which we dare not alter. But perhaps Max Müller would not have dispensed with the rite; or he might have left it an open question.

RECENT HINDU REFORMERS

Throughout its entire history Hinduism has been powerfully affected by its environment. On first entering India it borrowed largely from the original creeds. In later days Buddhism was nominally expelled; but it left much of its spirit behind. Muhammadanism has influenced Hinduism in the South, and still more extensively in the North.

It was therefore to be expected that Hinduism would sustain important changes when brought—as it is in our day—into close contact with Christianity and modern European thought. Even the great mass of the people knows something of the Gospel; and those who have received an education in English cannot possibly remain ignorant of its leading features. Every educated Hindu is thus compelled to compare the doctrines of Christianity with those of Hinduism; and, in the great majority of cases he learns to think as his fathers never thought. Even if he does not accept the full teaching of Christianity, there are many of its doctrines that shine in their own light and carry their own clear evidence with them.

But the desire of every true-hearted Hindu who has adopted Christianity even partially must be that the defects of his own religion may be supplied and its errors, if possible, corrected. Many men have so felt. We may select the names of four who earnestly sought the reformation of Hinduism.

The first was Rammohun Roy, a Bengali Brāhman born in 1774. Circumstances led him first to study Persian and Arabic and then Sanskrit. The strict monotheism of the Qurān impressed him, and he wrote a tract against idolatry. He then studied English, and in 1817 directed his thoughts earnestly towards the Christian faith. He became more and more desirous of the reform of Hinduism; and in 1820 he published in English and Bengali a book entitled "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness."

In 1830 he took the important step of opening a hall for public worship. Hitherto united public prayer had been unknown to the Hindus. The Society which he formed he called the Brāhma Samāj (usually written Brāhmo Samāj), meaning "Assembly of believers in Brāhma (God)."

Much notice was now taken of him and he

received the title of Rājā; but he had nobly borne not a little persecution. It is interesting to us Scotchmen to know that he said: "I was deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends, to whom, and the nation to which they belong, I always feel grateful." Dr Duff and his missionary associates showed him all possible sympathy in his trials; and, when the Missionary Institution was opened in 1830, Rammohun Roy heartily returned that sympathy.

He died at Bristol in England in 1833.

Debendernath Tagore was born in 1813. He joined the Samāj in 1841, and imparted to it a regular constitution introducing valuable rules. The Society was fully organised by 1844. Every member bound himself to abandon idolatry and pray daily to the one true God. In 1850 the infallibility of the Vedas was rejected by Debendernath and a majority of the members. The Samāj also rejected belief in any written revelation.

J. Keshub Chunder Sen, born in 1830, was not a Brāhman. He joined the Samāj in 1857. He taught a school in Bengali, and lectured to the Samāj in English. But Keshub advocated reforms for which Debendernath

was not prepared. Ardent, ambitious, self-reliant, Keshub became uncontrollable, and when in 1864 he celebrated a marriage between two persons of different castes, Debendernath told him that their co-operation must cease. Keshub and his friends formed a new Society in 1866; and, by August 1869, they had built and opened a place of public worship of their own.

Keshub called his new Society the "Brāhmo Samāj of India." He gave public lectures. One delivered on May 1866 attracted immense attention both in India and Britain. It was believed to indicate on Keshub's part a strong leaning to Christianity. But another lecture with the title "Great Men," delivered a few months later, was held to imply a retractation of some of the sentiments he had avowed regarding Christ. There was much ardour—much movement, in the new Samāj. Religious festivals, attended with no small excitement, began to be held from November 1867. Energetic efforts were made towards practical reform. Under its influence a Marriage Act was passed by Government, which legalised for Brāhmos the union of persons of different castes, and which fixed fourteen as the lowest

age for the marriage of females. Efforts also were made for the promotion of temperance.

By this time Keshub had visited Britain. He did so early in 1870; and in April of that year a public meeting was held in London to welcome him; in which Dean Stanley, Lord Lawrence, Dr James Martineau and other distinguished men took part. He was also granted a private interview with the Queen. He preached in a good many places of worship connected with the Unitarians.

By 1873 the autocracy exercised by Mr Sen was felt somewhat heavily. He believed in "Great Men," and held that, from time to time, Divine Providence endows some men with special power to purify and exalt religion; and he expected to be acknowledged as a leader remarkably commissioned.

He initiated several valuable reforms, but was opposed to other innovations demanded by not a few. He held, for instance, that in the emancipation of women, many were hurrying on too fast. In this, he lost the support of the Brāhmo ladies generally. A crisis was inevitable. Its coming was hastened by the marriage of his daughter to the Rājā of Kuch Behar. Both bridegroom and bride were under

the earliest age fixed by Mr Sen himself as allowable. Vehement remonstrances assailed him. A party proposed his deposition as minister; and only by calling in the police was he able to retain possession of the Brāhmo Mandir.

A great revolt succeeded; and a new Samāj was regularly constituted. An appeal was made to the provincial Societies, and fully two thirds of these joined the new body.

It was a terrible blow to Mr Sen. One cannot help feeling deeply for him. He was not faultless; he was ambitious, and probably despotic; but he had rendered very signal service to the cause of truth and freedom and righteousness; and now—for the strife waxed scandalously hot—he was attacked in the bitterest language by his former disciples, and every thing he did was ascribed to low and sordid motives. Keshub retaliated, and repaid scorn with scorn. The departure, however, of so many of his associates was in one sense a relief to him; he could now carry out his ideas without opposition. In 1880 the Society was called the "New Dispensation," and in a public lecture he claimed equality for it with Judaism and Christianity, and for himself a divine commission and "singular" authority.

The religion, he said, was "the wonderful solvent which fuses all Dispensations into a new chemical (sic) compound." Mr Sen now declared that all religions are true—a startling proposition, contradictory of much he had previously maintained.

As early as 1861 a great leaning to Ritualism had been observed in the services of the Samāj, and this greatly increased under the "new dispensation." An attached friend and follower wrote in August 1881, "Keshub is continually becoming more metaphysical and mystical. Recently he has very much given himself to mysticism. There has been a good deal of flags, flowers, fires, and sacraments of all kinds." Perhaps I am giving too many of such details; but Mr Sen's career, when carefully studied, seems to me to be variously and sorrowfully instructive. By and by he died; but who could be his successor? Naturally his accomplished relative and friend Mr P. C. Mozoomdar should have been; but bitter disputes arose which I have no heart to relate. The Samāj continues: and according to the Government census had gained somewhat in numbers during the last ten years, and now —we presume, including all its branches, has

4080 members—a poor account of what Mr Sen used confidently to designate as the Church of the future.

The fourth name to be mentioned in this connection is Dayānanda Sarasvati. He was a Gujarāti Brāhman born in Kātiawār in W. India. He began to attract attention about 1880. He maintained that of the Hindu Shestres only the Vedas are authoritative and that they teach strict monotheism. He rejected caste and idolatry. He forbade child-marriage, and allowed widows to remarry. So far then was the reformer. He said he found in the Vedas the elements of every kind of knowledge. All modern inventions were indicated there—railways, telegraphs, steamships, balloons, etc., and many others that are still to be discovered. He prescribed improvements in machines now used. By a rightly constructed balloon, he said, a man might visit the stars, as he now visits a neighbouring street. He dealt with politics also. Monarchy was right, but it ought to be elective; for so, he said, the Vedas clearly assert.[1]

[1] Some friends in India—whose judgment I can fully trust—mention that the Ārya-Samāj is very strongly "national," *i.e.* anti-foreign in feeling. This mixture of politics with religion is a serious evil.

These were new and startling views, and they drew no little attention. But at a great convocation of learned Brāhmans at Calcutta Dayananda's views—in so far as they differed from the ordinary belief—were declared to be unsound. Dayananda however went on travelling, lecturing, publishing, till he died in October 1883, at the age of fifty-nine. His system of thought, however, which is called Ārya Samāj, endures; and his followers are said in the Government census to be in number 92,419. The distinctive teachings of the Ārya Samāj, as the Society is called, are entirely baseless; yet it is far more flourishing than the Brāhmo Samāj. Finally let us note that the Ārya Samāj is decidedly Anti-Christian in its whole character and action. This is not the case with the Brāhmo Samāj, and this difference between the two Samājes ought never to be overlooked.

In Western India the movement towards religious reform has never attained the magnitude it possesses in Bengal.

As far back as 1840 a Society was formed for religious inquiry called the Paramhansa Mandali. The members were opposed to idolatry and caste, and favoured the re-

marriage of widows. The Society lasted till 1860, always holding its meetings in secret.

In 1864 Keshub Chunder Sen visited Bombay, and his stirring eloquence was not without effect. A Society of thirty-one members was formed, called the Wārthāna Sabhā, a Prayer Society, and it has slowly grown till its membership in Poona is above one hundred. Branch Societies also exist in five or six other places.

The Maratha people are certainly an energetic, manly race, but they have been timid in the matter of religious reform. I do not pretend accurately to state the reason of this; but the lethargy appears to be largely due to the influence of several men, all of them Brāhmans. Learned men they are, and of high character; but, as it has seemed to many, very irresolute. At all events, when they moved at all, it was, as one of them expressly said, "along the line of least resistance." A true reformer must surely set his face like a flint against opposition; he must have much of the martyr-spirit in him; but in several matters of practical reform these men did not carry out even the principles which they professed, and it was not to be expected that

they would act heroically in advancing religious change. I do not think that the Brāhmo Samāj of Bengal has ever expressed any penetrating sense of the evil of sin, and the necessity of a great redemption; but it has gone very far in its admiration of Christ as a great and holy teacher, and the noblest of martyrs. All this leaves doubtless a great gulf between the Samāj and the Church of Christ. But one earnestly wishes that Western India could unite were it only in that glowing admiration of Christ's character which was expressed so often by the eloquent lips of Chunder Sen.

It is singular that, as I write these words, I have come in contact with one of the latest utterances of the Brāhmo Samāj of Bengal. It runs as follows:—

"We Brāhmos of the New Dispensation believe that there can be no regeneration without Christ, who is 'the door' of the kingdom of heaven; and that, if any man comes not through that door, he has no place in it."

Excellent, so far. When will our friends in Western India go as far? We learn that the learned man who, without disrespect to others, may be called the leader of the Samāj

in West India, has recommended, as the basis of its religion, "the best portions of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā, and the teaching of the mediæval Hindu saints supplemented by certain things from Buddhism and from the Bible?"

We simply ask: If this advice is followed, how many thousand years must elapse before India can stand on a footing of equality with the enlightened nations of the West?

LECTURE THIRD

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism is the religion of the ancient Persians and the modern Pārsīs.

I hardly require to remind you of the high position held in ancient days by Persia. King Ahasuerus, as we are told in the book of Esther, reigned "from India even unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces." We all remember the great conflict of Greece with Persia, which made Marathon and Thermopylæ imperishable names, and the counter-invasion of Alexander of Macedon, which destroyed the first Persian empire. No less memorable is the close connection of the Persians and the Jews. The prophet Isaiah heralded in impassioned strains the advent of the great conqueror Cyrus, when he came to free the Hebrews from the Babylonian yoke, and to restore them to their own loved Palestine.

A very remarkable revival of the Persian empire took place about 500 years after it had been overthrown by the Macedonians. This second empire reached from the Euphrates to the Indus, and from the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean. It lasted about 400 years, and warred, sometimes successfully, against the Eastern empire. Then, in the year 632, the irresistible Arabs rushed in with their war-cry of "God and the Prophet"; and "the white palace of Chosroes" and the sumless wealth of Persia lay at the mercy of the desert-robbers. Zoroastrianism never recovered that terrible shock. The Arabs were earnest proselytisers; and they were quite prepared, when they deemed it fitting, to become persecutors. Zoroastrianism still exists in Persia; but it barely exists, and seems slowly dying out.

A body of Persians refused to yield to the Arab conquerors and retreated eastward. About 100 years afterwards they abandoned Persia and found their way by sea to Ormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Even there the Arab yoke was heavy; and the Persians soon sailed to Western India, which they reached in 717, landing about sixty miles north of

Bombay. The Hindu ruler of the district was compassionate to the exiles. He asked for some account of their religion, and in reply they said :—

> "O Prince of excellent fortune!
> We are the poor descendants of Jemshid;
> We reverence fire and water,
> Also the cow, the sun and the moon.
> Whatever God has created in the world
> We bow to it. . . ."

and so on.

Their statement is almost exclusively a list of ritual observances, and seems to prove the refugees to have been depressed and ignorant. But they had brought with them "the tools and skill of Khorasan."

They worked and prospered. Surat was then a very important commercial city, and soon attracted a large number of Pārsīs; but for many years past Bombay has been their chief abode. They are generally merchants, enterprising, and as a rule prosperous. They have been called the "Anglo-Saxons of the East." Not a few of their leading men have been distinguished for philanthropy. Considering the smallness of the community, the influence it exerts is remarkable. The late

census makes them out to be, in all India, 89,904 in number.

But enough about their general history. The religion can be traced back, in its leading features, to a very early time—at least to the days of Darius Hystaspis and some of them still farther back.

Xerxes, in his invasion of Greece, burnt the temples of Athens; but, on the whole, the rulers of the first Persian empire were by no means so intolerant as those of the second. The second commenced in the year 226 A.D., under Ardashir Bābegān (called by the Greeks and Romans Artaxerxes). Unlike Alexander of Macedon, who was something of a statesman as well as a warrior, and who wished to bring East and West into harmony, Ardashir strove to fan their immemorial discordance into hatred. He sought to blend his vast dominions into one homogeneous sovereignty. He would have none of what was called "the poison of Aristotle." He desired to revive the religion of Zoroaster, whose name was still widely revered. The account of the way in which, according to the Pārsīs, he tried to do so, is beyond measure wild. He summoned the priests of the ancient faith from all parts of

his dominions. The call was responded to by 80,000 men. Successive deductions brought the number down to seven, who were believed to surpass all the rest in wisdom and piety. The chief of these was Ardāi Virāf. He bathed, clothed himself in new garments, received from his companions three cups of soporific wine, and was then covered over with a clean linen cloth. He slept for seven days. During this time his soul quitted his body, and was conveyed into the immediate presence of the Deity. When he awoke he called for a scribe who might commit to writing the marvels he had seen and heard. He then dictated the articles of the Zoroastrian faith, and these the king and nobles readily accepted. So runs the legend, which was probably believed by only a portion of the ancient Pārsīs themselves, and which now awakens generally a smile among their descendants.

It is said that in Alexander's time two copies of the sacred books existed, of which one was burnt and the other carried off by the Greeks and lost. All we know is that the Parthians, who had wrested Persia from the Greeks, were fond of Grecian learning, and tolerated rather than patronised the Zoroastrian

faith. This apparently soon sank into a rude dualism, accompanied by the worship of fire.

But under Ardashir and his successors from 226 A.D. more than its ancient splendour was restored. Church and State were now united by the closest bonds, and the State became strongly intolerant. Christianity had been introduced into Persia. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites" were present on the day of Pentecost, and heard the preaching of St Peter, the effect of which was so remarkable. The Zoroastrian rulers resisted the Gospel from the first; and when Constantine became a Christian, the opposition to it became only fiercer. Certain it is that the Persian martyrology is rich in examples of unshaken fidelity to Christ under the severest persecutions. King Shapur II., from about the year 339, was a more relentless persecutor even than Decius or Diocletian. Chosroes II. (Khosru Parviz) in 590 took a solemn oath that there should be no peace between Persia and Constantinople until the Christians abandoned the religion of the Crucified, and embraced the religion of the Sun. He seized on Rhodes and kept a besieging army ten years before Constantinople. The Emperor Heraclius then awoke to his

extreme danger. In six successive invasions of Persia he greatly exhausted its resources; so that, when the Arabs rushed in, they carried all resistlessly before them. This last event occurred in A.D. 641. The Zoroastrians had then to implore for themselves that toleration which they had denied to others.

If we except its warlike ardour, there is little in the history of the second Persian empire which calls for notice. The Emperor Valerian was taken captive, and Julian was slain in battle. The people were ignorant and but partially civilised. The priests were narrow-minded and superstitious; and of all the kings only one has acquired a high name in history, *viz.*, Naushirvan the Just.

There are not a few questions connected with the history of Zoroastrianism which are still matters of keen controversy. We shall not enter into these, but shall in a great degree confine our attention to points in which there exists a large measure of agreement among Oriental scholars. Happily, these are not few in number; nor are they by any means devoid of interest. In these days, when so much attention is paid to the comparative study of

religions, the Avesta faith ought by no means to be overlooked. The system possesses some striking peculiarities. Further, it has had a very remarkable history. Most important problems are involved in its relations to Hinduism, Judaism, the Babylonian religion, the Gnostic heresies, and the great system of Manicheeism; and in the Mithraic mysteries, which were mainly of Persian origin, its influence spread extensively over the Roman Empire and even as far west as Britain.

Much had been written regarding Zoroaster and his religion, and many had been the speculations regarding his doctrines; but no satisfactory conclusions could be reached so long as the Avesta remained unknown. Even before the Christian era Zoroaster had become a mythical personage, and forged oracles were ascribed to him which only increased the perplexity. The laborious researches of scholars like Dr Thomas Hyde are deserving of high respect; but such men had to reason from *data* always insufficient and often untrustworthy. A new era in the study of Zoroastrianism began with the labours of Anquetil du Perron. The story of the travels and researches of this enthusiastic explorer reads almost like a romance.

He went to India in quest of the venerable book ascribed to Zoroaster; found it among the Pārsī priests of Surat; and, after years of toilsome investigation into its doctrines, returned in triumph with his prize to Europe. He published a French translation of it, with accompanying dissertations, in 1771. The work at once excited the greatest interest. This, after some time, began to diminish, mainly in consequence of the faulty character of the translation, which was frequently very obscure, and not infrequently incorrect. During the last fifty years, however, the study of the Avesta has been prosecuted by a succession of able men with unflagging zeal, and with no inconsiderable success.

We may mention, without disparagement of others, the following writers as of high authority: Westergaard, Spiegel, Haug, Canon de Harlez, Geldner, Jasti, Dr E. W. West, and Professor William Jackson.

We can trace the Avesta as we find it up to the time of the Sāsānian dynasty in Persia. The Persian Empire was restored in the year 226 after Christ by Ardashir Bābegān, the first of the Sāsānian line. He was a man of uncommon force of character; bold and success-

ful as a warrior, and skilful in administration. In building up his kingdom he called religion to his aid. He earnestly sought to collect the writings that inculcated the ancient faith of Zoroaster; and several of his successors persevered in the attempt. The canon of the Avesta was fixed under Shapur II., about the year 350; revision and condensation were effected in the reign of Khosru Parviz, between 531 and 579. The Avesta, as we possess it, may thus be safely traced back at least to the sixth century after Christ. We must allow for errors of transcription in the case of what had long been a dead language. Uncouth and unintelligible phrases abound in the work; the text is often manifestly incorrect, and critics are sorely tempted to try the undesirable expedient of conjectural emendation. Still, on the whole, here stands the Avesta, nearly as it must have stood some thirteen, or even fifteen, centuries ago. Further: although collected in the day of the Sāsanian kings, we have no reason to believe that it was then *composed.* An extensive literature existed in Persia before the Macedonian conquest. The tradition of the Pārsīs is that Alexander—"the accursed wretch Sikandar," as they call him—burnt all

their books, with the exception of a few fragments. The tradition cannot count for much; for the great conqueror was generally tolerant in matters of religion, and pursued as far as possible a policy of conciliation. The disappearance of the ancient books is rather to be regarded as the result of the centuries of confusion that succeeded the Macedonian conquest over the countries in which the Zoroastrian faith generally prevailed. Be this as it may, we have reason to believe that by far the greatest part of the Avesta was composed at various dates ranging from about the seventh to the fourth century before Christ. Portions may be still more recent; and it is possible, even probable, that some additions were made as late as the sixth century after Christ. The work, as it stands, is not only fragmentary but chaotic, wonderfully little skill having been exhibited in the arrangement of its component parts.

About Zoroaster himself we must say a few words. Some able men doubt his very existence, and find in his history only a mythical description of elemental war—an atmospheric storm. On the whole, we think that he actually existed; and that he was possibly a Bactrian,

but probably a Mede. There is reason to believe that while the Medes were under Assyrian dominion, their religion had to some extent become mixed with that of the conquerors; but that, when the foreign yoke was thrown off, an earnest attempt was made to revive the ancient Aryan faith. With this reformation we may provisionally connect the name of Zoroaster. Thus, in round numbers, we can with some probability assign his era to the commencement of the seventh century B.C.

On these questions, however, we can as yet attain to no more than plausible conjecture, and all dogmatism is out of place. Even the name of the great teacher—in Zend, *Zarathushtra*, has received no satisfactory explanation. We may believe—still, it is only a plausible conjecture—that the Avesta religion arose to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, among a race still semi-nomadic, but inclining more and more to pastoral and agricultural life. It seems to have powerfully affected Bactria and Media before it entered Persia. In the last-named country the precepts of the Avesta were but partially submitted to during the earlier reigns, from Cyrus downwards; but the power of the Magi—the priests—with a

short interruption after the death of the Pseudo-Smerdis, appears to have gone on steadily increasing, until the Macedonian conquest shattered it to pieces. The successors of Alexander reigned eighty years over Persia. Under the Parthian power which succeeded, the Magi slowly recovered a certain measure of authority; and Valkhash (Volegeses), one of the later kings, seems to have begun the work of collecting the scattered fragments of the sacred books. The Parthian dominion was overthrown by Ardashir Bābegān, who has been mentioned above; and, under him and his successors, Zoroastrianism obtained a far more influential position than it had ever previously held. This it retained until Persia was conquered by the Arabs, in the middle of the seventh century after Christ.

There can be little doubt that Ahura Mazda, the chief divinity in the Avesta, was originally the same as the Varuṇa Asura of the Veda. (Ahura is simply the Zend form of Asura, which means *Lord.*) A very lofty character is ascribed to this deity; if the Veda ever approaches the conception of holiness, it is in connection with him it does so. The

counterparts of Varuṇa, the heaven-god, are found in Zeus, Ju-piter, and Ahura Mazda; and it may be held as demonstrated that the conception of a supreme divinity, wise, powerful, and good, was common to the four great divisions of the Aryan race,—the Greeks, Romans, Hindus, and Iranians. It must have belonged to them before they separated from each other. Yet, although supreme, this divinity was not sole; he was, in the phrase which meets us so frequently from the time of Homer downwards, "the father of gods and men"; but he received no exclusive homage.

After the other branches of the Aryan family had migrated to the west, the Iranians and Hindus evidently remained for some time together; and hence many elements are common to the two systems of religion. But ere long the Indo-Iranian stream divided into two parts, which were never to re-unite. Each of the two systems of faith then received its own special development.

In India, Varuṇa was gradually divested of his serene majesty. Even in Vedic times Indra, the tumultuous god of the lower sky, who had none of his lofty attributes, was exalted into the place of Varuṇa; and other

gods were gradually multiplied. But in Irān (Persia) the authority of Ahura Mazda (*i.e.* the wise Lord) became more fully recognised than before. His moral attributes also were never obscured. Still, Ahura Mazda falls very far below the divinity who is revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. He is not a purely spiritual being. He is not omnipresent or omnipotent.

Closely connected with Ahura is a hierarchy of celestial beings, the Amesha-spentas. They are very generally adored along with Ahura. Thus: "We sacrifice to Ahura Mazda, bright and glorious; we sacrifice to the Amesha-spentas, all-ruling, all-beneficent." The function of these "holy immortals" is to inspect and aid the whole of the good creation. Their designations are as follows:—

1. Vohumano (literally, *good mind*). The name originally denotes submission to the revealed law. He became the genius of truth, and also of flocks.

2. Asha vasistha (*the best rectitude*) denotes conformity to divine order; truth and holiness. He presides over fire. He also cures disease.

3. Khshathra vairya (*supreme sovereignty*).

He represents royal dominion. He also presides over metals.

4. Spenta Armaiti (*holy wisdom*). She became the genius of the Earth.

5, 6. Haurvatāt and Ameretāt are generally mentioned together. Their names signify *health* and *immortality*. They denote the fulness of blessing.

In the Gāthās, the Amesha-spentas seem abstract ideas, or qualities, rather than personal beings. Their names sound like attributes of Ahura Mazda; and many passages appear to require them to be so understood.

Yazatas. This term means *worthy of worship*, and is occasionally used in that comprehensive sense. More frequently, however, it denotes a very large class of beings who are inferior in point of dignity to the Amesha-spentas.

Of the first kind are genii presiding over natural objects, especially those connected with the elements—fire and light, air, earth, and water.

Equal importance is attached to the genii connected with Light. A very high place among these is assigned to Mithra. He was originally the god of the luminous heaven.

It was towards the Christian era that the

worship of Mithra, mixed apparently with cruel rites borrowed from Babylon, spread far and wide in the west.

Of the genii of the waters the most celebrated is Ardvi sura Anāhit, *i.e. the high, powerful, undefiled.* She descends from the region of the stars.

Of the productions of the vegetable world the most celebrated was Homa, or Haomo. The Homa is a plant with thick stalks and yellow flowers, growing chiefly on the mountains of Ghilān in northern Persia. The Avesta speaks of it in the most exalted terms. It flourishes in resplendent glory on "the highest height" of the heavenly mountain Hara Berezaiti; its juice cures all ills of mind and body. The juice is extracted by pounding the plant with a pestle in a mortar. It is the enlivening, the beautiful, the lordly, the golden-eyed, the victorious, and the giver of victory. It is the most precious part of the offering.

The spirits of the air are not of much importance. The most important is Vâyu—the wind; who is said to belong in part to the good, and in part to the bad, creation.

Of the spirits of the earth the most im-

portant is Spenta Armaiti, who is also one of the Amesha-spentas.

The beings hitherto mentioned, with the exception of Anāhit, were originally common to the Indo-Iranian race. There are other divinities who are of purely Iranian origin, and unknown in India. The most important of these are the following:—

Sraosha. This name is derived from a verb signifying *to hear*. Sraosha is the genius of obedience to the law.

The Law (Daena) and the holy formulae or spells are also worshipped as divine. So are the sacred books, especially the Gāthās. Sacrifice is offered to them, and they are frequently invoked for aid.

A very remarkable class of divinities is that of the Fravashis. There is considerable obscurity—not to say contradiction—in the descriptions of them. Originally they probably were the souls of the dead; but, in process of time, all living beings—animals, as well as men—sky, waters, earth, fire, and plants, were believed to have each a Fravashi. Beings yet unborn possess them.

Space is also worshipped. So is Time.

It seems needless to go into greater detail.

There is nothing in the whole of the good creation that is not held to be deserving of worship. Prayers are addressed to human souls, the souls of animals, vegetables, springs of water, rivers, mountains, the earth, the wind, the sky, the stars, etc., etc.

We proceed now to speak of evil beings. The Avesta, as Professor Darmesteter rather sarcastically remarks, is "very rich in demons." Daevas, drujas, yâtus, pairikas, dvarants, dregvants, and so on; we have them of varied classes, and in numbers without number.

The chief of these—and the creator of all of them—is Angro mainyus or Ahrimān. His name in Zend means *hurtful spirit*. He is from all eternity; he is wholly evil; his original dwelling was in primeval, uncreated darkness, which existed in boundless space, far apart from the primeval, uncreated light. Angro mainyus was at first ignorant of the productions, and apparently of the existence of the good spirit. But when he became aware of these, he "broke into the fair creation," determined to counterwork, and if possible, destroy it. For every pure being created by the good spirit, Angro mainyus created a corresponding

evil being; in place of health, he made disease; and for life, death. The good spirit (we have seen) is surrounded by six immortal holy ones. Angro mainyus created six arch-demons, the grisly council of hell, whose very names seem mockeries of those of the pure hierarchy of heaven. The entire struggle between good and evil—light and darkness—lasts for twelve thousand years; and we are now in the thick of the fight.

Zoroaster was the only human being that could daunt Angro mainyus. He smote the fiend with the holy spells, and especially with the one called Ahuna vairya (or Honover), which was as strong a weapon as a stone of the size of a house. Still, however, the battle rages. Three sons of Zoroaster will yet be miraculously born, who will carry on his work, in which the last of them—Soshyant, or Sosiosh—will be completely victorious. Angro mainyus will be overthrown; he will be cast into hell, and (as is generally held) destroyed. Then comes the *frashokereti*, the perpetuation of life. The fair creation that had been slain by the fiend revives; the good live in a renovated world, and everlasting joy prevails.

Garotmana is often mentioned as the dwell-

ing-place of Ahura Mazda. The name means "the house of song." Ahura there sits on a throne of gold, surrounded by the Amesha spentas and Yazatas. Paradise is often identified with it. Hell is full of darkness and horror. It is situated in the north, under the earth; its mouth is beside the mountain Arezura.

The sacred fire is kept in a special building called Ātesh Bahram; in the innermost and most sacred division of the building. This is separated from the rest by a wall; but the door remains open.

Prayers are chanted *memoriter* by the priest (Mobed), in front of the fire. Every portion of the day has its allotted prayer. While these are offered within the inner apartment, the people without read or repeat prayers, facing the fire. Sometimes the worshipper may add an extempore supplication of his own in the vernacular. Women occasionally attend.

Prayers for the dead are recited daily in the Ātesh Bahram. Richer people generally have the service performed in their own houses; but poor peoble come to the fire-temple.

So much for public worship. But even the domestic fire is always sacred, and must be treated as such. It, too, must never be extinguished.

We may next speak of offerings. When asked how the demon could be repelled by him, Zoroaster said: "The sacred mortar, the sacred cup, the Homa, and the words taught by Mazda; these are my weapons, my best weapons."

The great Iranian heroes of the ancient times offered up animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices are not unknown in the Vendidad. For a certain very grave offence the guilty person must "slay a thousand head of small cattle, and offer the entrails to the fire." In other cases also animal offerings were required, until in comparatively recent times; but all such observances seem now to have entirely ceased.

In the present day, flesh (myazda) is not offered. The priest takes the cup containing the Homa in his right hand, raises it in his right hand before the sacred fire, and drinks a small quantity. The rest is poured into a well.

The Homa offering is made in private houses

as well as in fire-temples; and the ceremony should be performed twice a day.

Offerings are still made to the sea, consisting chiefly of flowers and fruits, such as cocoa nuts.

Ceremonial purity is with the Pārsī a matter of supreme importance. Defilement is easily incurred, and hence the means of purification are carefully prescribed in the Avesta. The glory of the Zoroastrian law is said to consist in its so fully and clearly declaring the ceremonies needful for cleansing the defiled.

The distinction between ceremonial and moral defilement is far from clear in the Avesta.

The great material agents of purification are water and *gomez* or *nirang* (*urina bovis*).

Everything that issues from the human body is regarded as dead, and as belonging to the demons. Even the hair and nails when cut off are the same; and elaborate prescriptions are given as to their disposal.

The great source of defilement is contact with a dead body.

The new-born child must be washed with water, not generally now with *nirang*. Before this, it is impure. Before the age of fifteen,

and generally between nine and eleven, initiation into the Zoroastrian faith takes place by means of prayers, purifications, and the putting on of the *kusti* (a string made of seventy-two woollen threads twisted together), and the *sadarah* or sacred shirt, which is of muslin with short sleeves.

When anyone dies, men first wash the body, dress it in white garments, and lay it on a stone slab in the front room. The priest comes and reads prayers. The women are now in the same room with the body, the men outside. During the last prayer a white dog, kept usually in the fire-temple, is brought near the corpse, and induced, if possible, to look at it. Two, now generally four, men lay the body on an iron bier. The dog is commonly brought in twice; and the whole ceremony may occupy forty minutes. Then the body is borne off by the four men—a fifth man preceding to clear the way, so that not even the shadow of an unbeliever may fall on the corpse. The priests walk two and two, generally holding a handkerchief between them. Ceremonies are performed close to the *dakhma*, or "tower of silence," as it is usually called in English. This is a circular pit very deep,

round which is a stone pavement about seven feet wide.

There are three great prayers, the potency of which is extolled continually and in the strongest possible language. These are the Ahuna vairya, the Ashem Vohu, and the Yenhe Hātām.

The Ahuna vairya is so called from the three initial words *Yathâ ahu vairyo.* It existed before heaven, earth, water or fire; and it is the most effective weapon that Ahura Mazda himself can use to crush the demons. It is much to be regretted that of this very important part of the Avesta we have at least six conflicting versions from scholars of high name. In the midst of this perplexity, the ordinary Pārsī will console himself with the reflection that the efficiency of the prayer depends entirely on the right sounds being uttered, and not at all on the sense attached to them. But we cannot be certain even of the sounds; for the commentary on the prayer given in the nineteenth chapter (Ha) of the Yasna must be founded on readings considerably different from those which the present MSS. contain. The translation of Haug is the following: "*As a heavenly lord is to be chosen,*

so is an earthly master (spiritual guide) for the sake of righteousness, to be the giver of the good thoughts, the good actions of life towards Mazda; and the dominion is for the Lord (ahura) whom he has given as a protector to the poor." With all possible respect for the learned man who supplies this version, it is almost impossible that this can be the meaning of the most potent, "most fiend-smiting" prayer in the Avesta. Professor de Harlez paraphrases it thus: "*As there exists a supreme master, perfect, so there is a master of the law established to maintain and propagate holiness; the regulator of good thoughts and of actions springing out of the order of things referring to Mazda. Sovereign power belongs to Ahura; he has constituted him* (viz. *the master of the law*) *protector (shepherd) of the poor.*" Professor Darmesteter renders the prayer as follows: *The will of the Lord is the law of holiness. The riches of Vohumano shall be given to him who works in the world for Mazda, and wields according to the will of Ahura the power he gave him to relieve the poor.*" The sense of the last rendering is clear; but it is not easy to see how the Professor extracts it from the present text. Finally, let it be remembered

that *holiness* or *righteousness*, as used in this passage and elsewhere in the Avesta, means merely ceremonial purity.

The Ashem Vohu prayer, which, if not so potent, is used still more frequently than the Ahuna vairya, is translated by Haug as follows: "*Righteousness is the best good; a blessing it is; a blessing be to that which is righteousness towards perfect righteousness.*" Darmesteter makes it: "*Holiness is the best of all good. Well is it for that holiness which is perfection of holiness.*"

Fasting occupies so important a place in most systems of religion, that its entire absence from the list of prescribed duties in the Avesta attracts the more attention. There is no trace of asceticism in the Avesta precepts or the Pārsī practice.

Marriage is much encouraged. It is implied that monogamy was the general rule. Yet one extraordinary practice is fully recognised in the later books of the Avesta—marriage with the nearest of kin.

Prostitution, adultery, sodomy, and such crimes are strongly denounced.

The observance of magical rites is in a few cases mentioned and reprobated.

The Avesta dwells with all possible earnestness on the importance of agriculture. Its ideas on this subject are embodied in quaint, and sometimes coarse, phraseology; but it is interesting to note the anxiety of the authors of the Avesta that the people should cease to be nomadic and take to a settled life. "Whoso cultivates barley cultivates righteousness."

The putting to death of the creatures of the evil principle is a high religious duty. If the division of animals into good and bad had been less arbitrary, this might have called forth a half-approving smile; but when we hear of tortoises, frogs, cats, ants, etc., being proscribed, we are somewhat startled. With all the efforts of the Avesta to be exact, there seems to be no division of fishes, and no clear division of birds, into good and bad. Every creature being either of divine or demoniac origin, this omission is—on the principles of the Avesta itself—a grievous fault.

The place assigned to the dog is very notable. One entire division of the Avesta is devoted to the celebration of his excellence.

Physical and ceremonial defilements are put on a level with moral offences. Contact with a dead body—especially that of a man or dog

—must with all possible care be avoided. To bury or burn a corpse is an unpardonable crime. So is it for one man to carry a dead body.

We can with all confidence regard the present Pārsī sacred books as having been recognised from the middle of the fourth century after Christ. Revision went on till about the middle of the sixth. Doubtless most or all of them were composed still earlier, but how much, it is exceedingly difficult to determine. Since that time they have probably remained almost unchanged.

Possibly some part of the Avesta may have been composed by Zoroaster himself or his contemporaries. But here again a serious difficulty presents itself. The date of Zoroaster has been the subject of much controversy. On the whole, it is probable that he lived nearly three hundred years before the invasion of Persia by Alexander of Macedon in 331 B.C. He was probably born in the west of Media. He seems to have preached with little acceptance there, but with much acceptance in Eastern Persia or Bactria. The King of Bactria, called by Persian writers Vishtāspa,

is said to have become a convert, and to have brought over many of his subjects to the new faith. Finally, Zoroaster is said to have died —at the age of seventy-seven—murdered, say some, when ministering at the altar, or rather perhaps slain in battle, along with his patron King Vishtāspa, by the same wild nomads who at a somewhat later time cut off the great Cyrus. Vishtāspa carried on wars for the extension of the Zoroastrian faith, and it is difficult to believe that Zoroaster did not approve of these, and share in them.

The early Persians, as the Greeks inform us, possessed an extensive religious literature. But in the long lapse of ages the greater part of this has perished. The portion that remains is about the size of our Bible. It is divided into five great parts, but Haug was justified in designating the whole collection "fragmentary and chaotic." Songs, prayers, laws, legends, with strange omissions and repetitions —such is the Avesta as we find it.

It consists of the following parts:—

1. The Yasna, including the five Gāthās or Hymns.

2. The Vendidād.

3. The Vispered.

4. The Yashts.

5. A few short prayers called Afrigan, Nyayish and Gah.

6. The Sirozah, a calendar of the days of the month.

The meaning of the word Yasna is *sacrifice*. This division of the Yasna contains the prayers that are offered along with sacrificial rites. The Gāthās, however, form its most important part. These are written in a different dialect from the rest of the Avesta, and may perhaps be more ancient.

The Vendidād is the law-book. The name is characteristic; it means *given against the demons*.

The Vispered contains prayers very similar to those in the Yasna. The name means *all heads* or *all chiefs*. The chief objects of the good creation are invoked in it.

It is exceedingly difficult to see any principle determining the division and arrangement of the sacred book. It almost seems as if the various recovered parts of the Avesta had been huddled together as they came to hand.

The Avesta contains no system of homogeneous doctrine. The Gāthās are almost, if not wholly, monotheistic. The Vendidād leans

towards dualism. In the Yashts the faith can hardly be distinguished from polytheism.

The theology of the Gāthās is remarkable. They acknowledge Ahuramazda as the supreme divinity. Now, there is little or no doubt that this being was originally the same as Varuna Asura of the Vedas, who also in pre-Vedic days was probably acknowledged as the supreme divinity, and retains throughout the Vedas a distinct pre-eminence as the god of heaven, *i.e.* the distant, pure, cloudless heaven.

But the striking thing is that while, as time went on, the Indian deity sank in character and power, the Persian deity never did so. The Persian system never fell into either gross polytheism or pantheism. If not pure monotheism, it generally comes very near it.

The two races, the Hindu (or Aryan) and Persian, had once lived in close proximity to each other and worshipped the same gods. The one body was pastoral and largely nomadic. The other lived a settled life and cultivated the soil; in fact, there is no duty on which the Avesta insists more zealously than this. Quarrels easily arose; and by the time the Avesta was composed there was deep

hostility. Hating the Aryans, it was easy for the Persians to hate their gods. The Persian faith was by and by reformed, as the Pārsis assert, by Zoroaster; and many of the gods of the Hindus came to be called *devils* by the Persians. It is highly probable that there had been a great struggle in which the Persians were victorious. And this might well have been one chief reason for the Āryas seeking a home in India beyond the snowy mountains.

One cause of the difference between the two religions I have already suggested; the Persians probably extended their hatred of the Āryas to their religion. But this is not sufficient to explain the great divergence of the systems.

It is a most interesting problem: what occasioned this strong distinction between the two religions? In other words, what led to the great reformation which is attributed to Zoroaster?

I do not wish to dogmatise, and will only mention one or two historical facts, which must not be ignored, and which seem to bear directly on the question. The Ten Tribes, when carried captive by the Assyrians, were conveyed

to "Halah and Hazor, the river of Gozan, and *the cities of the Medes.*" Now Zoroaster was very probably a Mede. His earnest and inquiring mind surely could not have come in contact with the Israelites and learned nothing from them. The carrying away of the tribes from Palestine took place in 723-721 B.C. The probable date of Zoroaster was a little later. And when afterwards the two tribes of the Jews were carried into Babylonia, only the most friendly relations existed between them and their deliverers, the Persians. The acute critic Darmesteter admits that the Avesta "represents essentially the religion of the early Persians," but holds that, "in consequence of intercourse with the Greeks and Jews, it is now pervaded all through with new principles." He maintains that this took place chiefly after the conquest of Persia by Alexander. So be it, but I contend that the Hebrew influence *began* nearly three hundred years before Alexander, and probably never entirely ceased. Canon de Harlez earnestly maintains this. I am far from saying that the Persian conception of Ahuramazda rises to the sublimity of the Hebrew conception of Jehovah; still, when we remember the ideas which even the cultured

Greeks and Romans entertained of their gods, it is truly remarkable that the comparatively uncultured Persians should have believed in one God, a great and wise and holy God, and that throughout their whole history they have kept themselves free from image-worship.

Ahuramazda is surrounded by a hierarchy of celestial beings, called Amesha-Spentas, or "holy immortals." Their names sound like attributes of God—and such they probably were at first; though gradually they were held to be a kind of council. There is also a somewhat inferior class of Yazatas, whom we may call angels.

Great is the importance attached to Fire, and the being presiding over it occupies the highest place among the angels. The Pārsīs have often been called fire-worshippers; but, now at least, they earnestly contend they do not *adore* fire; they only pay it reverence, as the purest symbol of the unseen Deity.

The ancient Persians were very deeply impressed by the existence and power of Evil, evil in the physical world, and evil in the heart of man. They came very soon to believe that its existence was owing to the power of a personal being, whom they called Angra

Mainyus or Ahrimān. He is entirely antagonistic to Ahuramazda—as opposite as darkness is to light. There is continual war between the two powers, and, though the omnipotence of the good power is never denied, the two sides are so nearly matched, that we have at times almost a doctrine of Dualism rather than of Monotheism. But this probably came at a later time.

The worshipper of Ahuramazda is commanded to put forth his utmost efforts to counteract the works of the evil power. We have nothing like this in the Hindu books, and it is a noble characteristic of the Persian system. Active energy in support of the right and the true was deemed imperative; inaction was almost as culpable as opposition to the good.

No doubt, when they sought to destroy the works of the evil being, they were led to some very strange conclusions. For they had divided all things and all creatures into two great camps, so to speak. Every creature, every thing, was on the side either of Ahuramazda or Ahrimān. Thus, the dog was good, but the cat was bad. The fixed stars were all on the side of the good principle; the planets were

with the evil one. Stranger still, most trees were good; but the bark was the work of demons. If I wished to amuse my readers, other examples equally droll might be supplied; but I have no heart to laugh, nor, I am sure, have you, at the attempts of a simple-minded, earnest race to solve the high problems of the universe.

The great struggle between good and evil is said to last for 12,000 years, and we are in the midst of it. It will terminate in the complete destruction of the Evil Power and all his works. It is sometimes implied that Ahrimān is not finally destroyed, but restored to truth and goodness.

So much for moral evil. But there is not only moral evil in the world; there is also physical; there is sickness—there is suffering. Whence came they? The answer of the Persians to this question shows us one of the weakest things in their theology. They never rise to the conception of sorrow as *discipline*—as a preparation for purer service and higher joy. They never say with our English poet, "Sweet are the uses of adversity." They did not believe that suffering of any kind could come from the Good

Principle, for He is invariably kind; it could only be the work of the great enemy. Now, this confounding of physical and moral evil is of course a fundamental mistake and has far-reaching consequences; and I should be thankful to know that all well-educated Pārsīs had been able to get rid of the error. I fear they hold that bodily sickness is caused by some one of the multitude of demons that are ever ready to assault human beings; and that they are themselves blamable for the sickness, because the demon would have had no power to afflict them if they had been on their guard against him.

The teaching of the Gāthās (hymns) is very simple. We hear of the greatness and goodness of Ahuramazda who is called "the primeval spirit," "the essence of truth," "the creator of all good creatures." There are earnest exhortations to avoid all evil and to be pure in thought, word and deed. Very great stress is laid on leading a settled life and cultivating the soil. In reference to the nomadic races around, who were always on the watch to attack them, the language is exceedingly stern. "Slay the liars; kill the wicked with the sword": such words are

frequent and far from pleasant; but we must remember that the Zoroastrians earnestly desired peace, while the tribes around were bent on war. It was simply a question of slaying or being slain.

In the remarkable rock-inscriptions made by the great Darius at Behistun (Bisitun), Auramazda (so the name is given) is distinctly called "the greatest of all objects of worship." This is in accordance with the Gāthās. We must remember that there are a multitude of beings among whom Ahuramazda, though supreme, is not alone worshipped. Indeed, there is nothing in the good creation—the world as made by God—that may not receive a reverence which is hardly distinguishable from worship. Prayer is addressed not only to the Supreme Being but to angels and archangels, to human souls, the souls of animals, springs of water, mountains, and so on. This looks very like Hindu polytheism; but there still exists this great distinction—that in the Persian system God always remains immeasurably above all other beings. If we were to call them polytheists, the Pārsīs would complain bitterly. In this connection we must remember that there are fellow-Christians of

ours who pray to saints and angels, and yet we never call them polytheists.

With regard to the ritual, the sacrifice of animals was frequent in the earliest times. The ancient hero Thraetono is said to have offered up a hundred horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep. This doubtless is a mere legend, but it shows the bent of the people's mind. The animals offered seem to have been specially horses and camels. In speaking on Hinduism I mentioned that the most splendid sacrifice was that of the horse. Apparently it had been handed down from the time when the Persians and Hindus were united, and before the arrival of the Hindus in India.

In later days we find that Xerxes sacrificed horses to the river Strymon. At another time he sacrificed on the site of Troy a thousand oxen, and the Magi who were with him offered white horses; and again, he poured a libation out of a golden cup into the sea. The sea was part of the good creation, which doubtless the Persian king was in the habit of worshipping; but Herodotus tells us that when the waves of the Hellespont had broken down the bridge which he had constructed between

Sestos and Abydos, he ordered that it should be punished by three hundred stripes being inflicted on the water, and further that a pair of fetters should be thrown into it. "I have even heard," says the historian, "that he sent persons to brand the Hellespont with a hot iron." These follies seem hardly credible; yet things not very dissimilar have happened even lately. I well remember the time when a distinguished Pārsī merchant of Bombay, when he was sending a great consignment of opium to China, endeavoured to secure an easy passage for it by pouring 300 tubs of sugar-candy into the deep—or, I rather think, 3000. I am not aware that the temper of the Ocean was much sweetened by the offering.

Animal sacrifices are distinctly prescribed in the Pārsī law-book, the Vendidād. These were offered down to a comparatively recent time; but they have now completely ceased.

Almost everything was personalised in the Pārsī system. The things so dealt with were reverenced if good, but hated and warred against if evil. Pārsīism, as Darmesteter has said, is "rich in demons"; and certainly the number of evil creatures who are ready to assail the Pārsī, and against whom

he must stand continually on his guard, is amazingly large. The English language does not suffice to name one half of them—storm-fiends, demoniac nymphs, fairies, hob-goblins, and wizards that are as bad as fiends. This terrible fight is continued even in the "sea" above the sky. The great means of overcoming them is the uttering of some holy word—that is to say, a spell or incantation. Of all these creatures I specially notice one. That is Aeshma deva—"the roaring demon," who in later days became almost as terrible as Ahrimān himself. He seems mentioned in the Apocrypha under the name, hardly changed, of Asmodeus.

The Avesta has only a very circumscribed range of doctrine. That may be partly explained by the loss of sacred books; but as far as we can discover, the Persians were always men of action rather than of thought. No doubt the activity often assumed strange forms. Thus it was the solemn duty of the Parsi to destroy—as far as in him lay—the living productions of the evil power. If the division into good and bad had been less arbitrary, this command might have called forth a half-approving smile; for the destruc-

tion of noxious creatures, such as tigers and serpents, is surely an excellent thing. But when we see that frogs and ants and a whole host of other innocent creatures are put under the ban, we are considerably startled. The condemnation was, of course, the result of pure ignorance; and, as such, it is now visibly, though slowly, passing away. The prejudice against cats, however, as far as I am aware, continues to this day. Pārsī children have no playmate in pussy. I am sorry for pussy, and still sorrier for the children.

Among all animals the dog is the special favourite. We can understand this. The watchful house-dog and the shepherd's dog were of course invaluable. I am not aware whether there were lap-dogs, I presume there were; I leave it to the ladies to guess. But the dog of dogs is the water-dog. Who he is I have tried in vain to discover. A Pārsī friend thinks it was some fabulous mythological creature—something like a water-kelpie (well-known in Scottish song) shall we say? The murder of any dog is a great offence, but the murder of a water-dog is inconceivably heinous. The punishments assigned to the various crimes are certainly perplexing. Thus, manslaughter

is visited with ninety stripes, but the murder of a water-dog deserves ten thousand stripes.

It seems impossible that legislation of this sort could ever have been practically carried out. It could not have been so under the earlier Persian empire, and probably not even in the later empire, that of the Sasanians. The law-book of the Avesta—the Vendidād—presents the later priestly idea of right and wrong rather than State jurisprudence, and I think we may dismiss the belief that legislation of this kind could ever have been more than a sacerdotal recommendation or theory.

It is satisfactory to be able to quote the statement of Pārsī theology made a few years ago by a late chief priest of the body in Bombay:—

"The one holy and glorious Lord, the Creator of both worlds, I acknowledge. He has no form and no equal. There was nothing before Him; He always is, and always will remain. God has no shape; He is enveloped in holy, pure, brilliant, incomparable light. No one can adequately praise Him. Among invisibles He is invisible. The Lord is greatly superior to angels. He is present in every place. He is almighty. He is most just

and wise. He is worthy of service and praise, and "imperative is His demand for obedience."

These are remarkable utterances; let it be noted that I have only very slightly condensed the prolix Oriental phraseology, leaving the sense entirely unchanged. I believe the high priest knew no English, and had drawn no idea from any European books—though, doubtless, Christian thought was "in the air."

Somewhat less authoritative, but perfectly trustworthy, is a statement from another quarter. It is a quotation from a Pārsī Catechism.

Question. "What commands has God given us through His prophet, the holy Zoroaster?"

Answer. "To know God as one; to know the prophet, the exalted Zartosht, as the true prophet; to believe the religion and the book brought by him as true beyond all manner of doubt; to believe in the goodness of God; not to disobey any commands of the holy (Mazdiasnian) religion; to avoid evil deeds; to strive after good deeds; to pray five times daily; to believe in the just award pronounced the fourth morning after death; to hope for heaven and fear hell; to believe firmly in the

day of general resurrection; . . . and to face some luminous object while worshipping God."

With regard to the last expression, let me observe that it is used with some latitude. Thus the Pārsī often prays facing the sea, as an important part of the good creation.

This reminds one of the excuse the Hindus always offer for their idolatry. An image, they say, is necessary for them to fix the mind upon, which otherwise would wander and lose itself. I have always felt this answer—when not proudly but sorrowfully given—to be most pathetic. I need not stop to say how Christianity meets this great necessity.

In many systems of religion, Asceticism, *i.e.* bodily mortification, plays a very important part; specially is this true of Hinduism, in which it assumes a most extravagant position, amounting sometimes to religious suicide. In Zoroastrianism, however, there is not the slightest trace of asceticism. On the contrary, the Pārsī must eat well and drink well, and, as far as in him lies, keep his body strong, so as to be better able to repel the attacks of his enemies the demons.

The Pārsī believes in heaven and in hell. After death the soul continues beside the body

for three nights, and then the good soul advances by a pleasant path to heaven, Garodman, or the abode of song. The evil soul proceeds by a very unpleasant road till it sinks into hell.

We hear not unfrequently of the Chinvat bridge, or, "the bridge of the gatherer," which extends over hell. To the good man it broadens out into a pathway which he traverses with ease; to the bad man it becomes narrow, yea, sharp as a razor's edge; and so he falls into the abyss below.

But besides the decidedly good and bad there is a third class—not good enough for heaven or bad enough for hell. This kind of soul is kept till the resurrection in the open space between earth and the fixed stars, where it suffers from the variations of heat and cold.

With regard to the future of the world the views of the Zoroastrians are clear and definite. As the end draws near, the powers of evil become increasingly active. Three great prophets are successively sent, who labour to restore the Zoroastrian religion. The last and greatest is Soshyans (Sosiosh), a name which may be translated *Saviour*. He is a son of Zoroaster, miraculously born. Having

completely vanquished all opposition, he raises the dead. The just and unjust are then separated. The unjust are thrown into hell for three days. The metals in the mountains melt with heat and flow over the earth in a mighty stream. All have to pass through this melted metal, but to the good it feels only like warm milk. All are cleansed; a draught of *haomo* juice is supplied to them, and men become immortal.

But the powers of evil gather for one final and tremendous effort. Each archangel grasps an archfiend; and finally Ahrimān and the dragon Az flee away to darkness and misery. Even hell itself, however, is purified; it is united to earth; and the world thereafter reposes in everlasting purity and peace.

The Avesta is by no means always consistent; but the view now stated is, on the whole, the more prevalent one. The ancient Zoroastrians cherished the hope, if not the firm belief, that good would eventually triumph over evil, and indeed that all men would finally be purified and happy.

We may now glance for a moment at Zoroastrian worship. The fire-temples—fire-houses rather—are all buildings of a single

storey, and are never constructed with any splendour. They consist of three compartments. The first is large. Both priests and people gather there, and generally converse together, sitting. A wall, with a door in it, divides this from the second compartment, which is a small square room. Many little bells hang about, which the worshipper rings. He does not sit down. The third compartment only a priest can enter. An officiating priest is always there, dressed in long white robes, his hands covered with white cloths, his face veiled. There is an urn of bronze, or perhaps of silver, on an erection five or six feet in diameter, in which there is fire, never smouldering, always blazing. Day and night the priests feed this fire with fragrant sandalwood. The worshipper lays downs his offering of sandalwood on the ground at the entrance. He must not touch the priest. The priest takes up the wood with a tongs and gives the worshipper some ashes with a small brass spoon. The worshipper faces the fire and prays in Zend. Does he understand the meaning of the words? Very seldom, I presume. But the sounds are sacred.

We must all feel that this is a painfully

meagre service. If it can be called *public* worship, it is in no sense *social* worship. There is no singing, no reading, of the sacred books; and no preaching.

But there is also what we may call domestic worship. Each family has a priest. He brings sea water and sprinkles it on the door-posts every morning and evening. He prays as he sprinkles the sea water, and repeats the names of all the members of the family. This surely is a significant and striking thing. Every morning and evening also the priest bears a little brass pan (censer) into every corner of the house.

It would be the greatest of calamities and of sins if the fire in the fire-temple were allowed to go out. It would be a great calamity also if the domestic fire were allowed to do so.

The most peculiar of the observances of the Pārsīs is their way of disposing of the dead.

The dead body is believed to be utterly polluted and polluting. It cannot be buried, for it would pollute the earth. It cannot be burnt, for that would pollute the fire. The Pārsīs expose the corpse on what is called "a tower of silence," which is built in some lonely place. Vast numbers of vultures

collect there, and keep diligent watch. The body is brought into the inclosure and laid down. The clothes are torn off, and the body is fully exposed. The vultures instantly swoop down upon it and in an incredibly short time only the bare skeleton remains, which is then thrown into the great general receptacle below.

The proportion of men among the Pārsīs who have raised themselves to distinction is by no means small. There have been great and successful merchants; there have been great philanthropists; two have been members of the British Parliament, and one of them is so still.

It may be well to sum up very briefly the leading points on which the Zoroastrian faith decidedly takes precedence of Gentile systems generally :—

1. It ascribes no immoral attributes to the object of worship.

2. It sanctions no immoral acts as a part of worship.

3. None of the prescribed forms of worship is marked by cruelty.

4. In the great contest between good and evil the Zoroastrian is commanded to take an active share in support of the good.

5. There is no image-worship.

6. Polygamy is forbidden, and a position of respect is given to women.

7. Very great importance is attached to good thoughts, words, and deeds.

8. The Avesta never despairs of the future. Good will finally triumph.

How far has this interesting and singularly compact race been affected by Christianity?

The first case of conversion from their ranks occurred in 1839. Three young pupils in the Scottish Missionary Institution desired to be baptised. One of them was seized by his relatives and prevented from coming forward, the other two were baptised and lived long afterwards as faithful missionaries. One of them, still alive, is the venerable and much esteemed Rev. Dhanjibhai Nauroji. Equally respected is the Rev. Ruttonjee Nasrojee of the C. M. S. The Sorabjee family, also, have long had a valuable school in which Christian instruction is given. Miss C. Shapurji has studied law and fills an important office in England.

Within a few years past there has been an interesting experiment called a Missionary

Settlement for University women. The excellent ladies connected with it have not found the Pārsīs very accessible to Christian teaching. An influential paper quickly sounded an alarm. It exclaimed :—

"Pārsī brethren! what blindness is this? It seems as if mental blindness had attacked some Pārsī brethren. Lady graduates have come from England to give higher education to Pārsī girls. All honour to them that they have not concealed their purpose, but say openly that their desire is to teach the Christian religion. It is our duty to sound the trumpet of warning. The very foundations of the peace and happiness of many are being slowly undermined. There are Pārsī ladies who are graduates. Why are they not employed? Pārsī women, beware!"

The English ladies do not restrict their efforts to school teaching. They would most gladly give Bible lessons to their Pārsī sisters. But while many in the Pārsī community are jealously watching every movement, these ladies have an arduous task assigned them. Nevertheless, let them persevere. A gentle, pure, noble Christian life is never lived in vain. The tone of Pārsī society will be raised and

sweetened even though there should be no baptisms for a considerable time. Perhaps, when the Pārsīs come to Christ they will come as a community, not merely as individuals. But be the time of their coming near or far-off, the "Missionary Settlement for University women" will be seen, when that day arrives, to have contributed in no small degree to bring on the blessed change.

Strange are the revolutions in history; strange the vicissitudes that befall religions as well as kingdoms. It was the belief of the ancient Persians that the whole world would be converted to the law of their Prophet Zoroaster; and, when the great Darius and his successors had laid Northern India under tribute, had overpowered Asia Minor and Egypt, and were hurling their huge armaments against the coasts of Greece, it seemed as if the daring expectation might be fulfilled. But Marathon, Thermopylæ and Salamis were not fought in vain; the torrent of Asiatic invasion was stemmed, and the civilisation of Hellas stood secure. Then under Alexander of Macedon Persia sank in ruins. Five hundred years elapsed, and Persia rose again to grasp

at the sovereignty of Western Asia; and repelling alike the Christian faith and Greek philosophy, she claimed the East, from the Ægean to the Indus, for the ancient and resuscitated law of the great Persian teacher. Sternly, relentlessly, she prosecuted the combined work of conquest and conversion for four hundred years; and then she fell, to rise no more. What is Persia now? We do not find in all history a more lamentable contrast than that which exists between the Persia of Cyrus Darius and the Persia of our own day.

At present the country has fallen into political insignificance, and gross corruption prevails universally; and along with this—as in the case of those sectaries, the Bābīs—the most atrocious cruelty. Nor is there the least hope of improvement while Persia remains Muhammadan.

The Pārsī community in Bombay has recently been greatly agitated. The son of a distinguished Pārsī merchant married a foreign wife—a Frenchwoman. He had her first invested with the sacred shirt and string that always mark the Zoroastrian, and then the marriage ceremony was performed according

to Pārsī rites. The lady herself was anxious to be regarded as a member of the Zoroastrian community and join in their worship. But a party calling itself orthodox objected, maintaining that Zoroastrianism does not approve of proselytes. A great meeting was called in order to consider the question.

In the meantime news came from Europe that three young Pārsīs had married Christian wives, and that a fourth had married a Jewess. Great was the consternation in Bombay. What were things coming to? Many meetings were held, and the discussions were often stormy. In the end, it appeared that it could not be proved that Zoroastrianism disapproved of proselytism; but no final decision was definitely arrived at. The so-called orthodox party is certainly wrong in holding that Zoroastrianism rejects proselytism; and the marriage of Pārsīs with English and other foreign ladies is certain to go on increasing, since enterprising Pārsīs will continue to go abroad. Grave consequences to Zoroastrianism are sure to follow. It is not likely that many Christian or Jewish women, if married to Pārsīs, will imitate Mrs Tata, and seek to become Zoroastrians; their influence much more probably will tend to draw their

husbands away from the Pārsī faith. Undoubtedly the purest of Gentile creeds is Zoroastrianism; it stands nearer to Revealed truth than any other. It seems only natural, then, that it should be the first of existing Gentile systems to merge in Christianity.

NOTE ON ZOROASTER

It is much to be regretted that we know so little about this celebrated man. We may well believe that the religion of ancient Irān was founded by a personage who has generally been known by the name of Zoroaster; but really this is nearly all we know regarding him. Professor Williams Jackson of Columbia University has done his best to dispel the darkness. He has laboriously collected the passages in the Greek and Roman classics that refer to Zoroaster, and he has also quoted the statements of a large number of Oriental writers. Yet, after going over the whole of these, we are left in dire perplexity. Even the existence of Zoroaster cannot be said to be more than probable; and the silence of Herodotus and of Darius, in his great inscription, are difficult to explain. Contradictions regarding Zoroaster

abound among both classical and Oriental writers; and from the latter we seldom get anything beyond fantastic legends, nor indeed much more from the former.

"Amid all the dross," says the professor, "grains of gold are to be found." That is surely probable, but opinions will differ as to the number of the grains. The reader will judge.

Zoroaster was probably born in the West of Irān, in Media Atropatene, between 660 and 533 B.C. He had three wives at the same time, and had children by the first two.

Allusions in the classics imply that his early youth was much given to quiet meditation.

The Zartosht Nāmah is a modern book, but is very popular among the Pārsīs. We give a brief summary of its statements. At the end of thirty a divine revelation was imparted to him. He was led in ecstatic trance into the immediate presence of God and the archangels. Marvellous things were shown, and sublime truths were revealed. On coming back to earth he began to preach. Six additional visions were vouchsafed in the following seven or eight years. He thus became possessed of sublime knowledge. But the

powers of evil assailed him. Zoroaster, however, was all-equipped, having among other things obtained from Aharamazda stones as big as a house to hurl at the fiends. The fiends were discomfited.

For ten years Zoroaster preached before he had one convert. The first was his cousin. He was then led by divine guidance apparently to the court of King Vishtāspa at Bālkh. He preached, but in vain. He had a terrible struggle to pass through—lasting it would seem two years. He was accused of sorcery, and thrown into prison. On this the four legs of the favourite horse of the king were found drawn up into its belly. Zoroaster promised to restore the animal to its natural state on certain conditions. Vishtāspa gladly consented to the terms. First, the king must accept the faith. He agreed; whereupon Zoroaster prayed, and the right foreleg came out. Secondly, the king must promise that his brave son Isfendiār should fight on behalf of the faith. Agreed; and then the right hind leg appeared. Next, Zoroaster requested the conversion of the queen. Agreed; and lo! the hind leg came forth. Fourthly, Zoroaster demanded that those who had plotted against him should

be put to death. Granted also; and then the wonderful horse stood as stout on his four legs as ever.

We pass over various marvels; among which the king's son is made to partake of a pomegranate and so becomes invulnerable.

Vishtāspa is often mentioned in Pārsī and Muhammadan books. He was a zealous supporter of the hitherto struggling faith. The members of his court became converts, and the religion began to spread over the whole region. It seems certain that the zealous king was intolerant, and advanced the faith by the sword. The Shāh Nāmah speaks of missionaries being sent forth to India, Asia Minor and elsewhere. Two famous Hindu sages—Śankarāchārya and Vyāsa—seem pointed at as converts, as is also a Greek philosopher whose name cannot be identified. The Dinkart asserts that there was a translation of the Avesta into Greek. This is certainly a mistake; but as several Greek writers, including Plato, were acquainted with the Magian doctrines, the mistake was not unnatural. We hear of fire-temples—ten at least—as having existed before Zoroaster. One of his main employments was to found others. King Vishtāspa was con-

verted when Zoroaster was forty-two years old. The latter did not die till he was seventy-six.

At least eight wars were successively carried on against the unbelievers. Then came the longest and most terrible war of all. Arejetāspa, or Arjāsp, was a Turanian king. He demanded tribute from Vishtāspa, but hatred of the new religion was also strong in his heart. By the advice of Zoroaster, Vishtāspa refused the demanded tribute. Arjāsp, in return, ordered Vishtāspa to renounce the new faith as well as pay the tax. The demand was refused, and both sides prepared for war. The account of it may best be read in the great Persian poem the Shāh Nāmah in which it is detailed with all the lavish luxuriance of Oriental imagery. Arjāsp was driven back in disgrace to his own capital. Some years elapsed, and Arjāsp returned with a still mightier army. He stormed the city of Bālkh; the sacred fires were quenched in the blood of the slaughtered priests; and, worst of all, Zoroaster was slain. The circumstances of his death are not ascertained; the Western do not agree with the Oriental statements. But there can be little doubt that he died a death of violence.

PĀRSĪS IN PERSIA

In the Maratha newspaper of 29th April 1904, we read that the Pārsīs in Persia lately presented to Sir Mortimer Durand, our Minister at the Court of Persia, an address, in which they speak in strong language of the sore grievances they have to bear, and declare themselves sinking into despair. They entreat his Excellency to do what may be in his power for their relief. The matter is delicate; but, no doubt, Sir Mortimer will do for them all he can.

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LECTURE FOURTH

BUDDHISM

The system of belief called Buddhism is widely extended over Asia, but it has scarcely affected any of the other three quarters of the globe.

Extravagant statements have sometimes been made regarding the number of its professors; and when all the inhabitants of China are called Buddhists, we need not be surprised if we hear of four hundred millions. But Buddhism is not the chief religion of China; and the entire number of true Buddhists in the world cannot safely be reckoned as much above one hundred millions. Buddhism is divided into two great schools, the Southern and the Northern. Professor Rhys Davids declares that "Northern Buddhism has developed into a totally new religion," and the language is hardly too strong. Or, as a great authority in the Southern school expresses it, "The monks of the great council overturned

religion; they broke up the old Scriptures and made a new recension."

We deal at present with Buddhism as it once existed in a great part of India and still exists in Burma and Ceylon. It is of the Southern school, and also is the Buddhism of Siam. We shall have little occasion to refer to the Northern school, which is found, though with many varieties, in Nepal, Kashmir, Tibet, Mongolia, China and Japan.

We naturally begin by mentioning what we know of the founder of Buddhism. Unhappily, that is very little—so little that critics of high name have doubted whether Buddha was a real man—whether he was not a "solar myth." No history of him was written for several centuries after his death, and by that time there had gathered round the real Buddha an immense mass of legendary lore. There are a hundred fantastic tales to be met with in books respecting him with which I will not trouble you. Of Buddha and early Buddhism I will mention what on the whole appears fairly credible.

The name Buddha is a designation; it means "the enlightened one"; his real name may probably have been Gotama. He was the son

perhaps of a petty prince, or rather a nobleman, in Northern India. His birthplace was Kapilavastu, a city about a hundred and sixty miles N. of Benares.

In all probability Buddha was born about the year 560 B.C. Speculation had been rife in India before this time, and among other things it was said that, when a man knew the truth—or, as they expressed it, "the true self"—he abandoned all desire for worldly prosperity or possessions of any kind, and went forth as a solitary mendicant. In this and several other matters Buddha only gave full expression to conceptions already existing in the higher Brāhmanical mind; although, as Buddhism developed, very much was added that Brāhmanism could not accept, just as much was thrown aside which Brāhmanism earnestly clung to.

Buddha was born at a time when the higher mind of India was in a state of no small agitation. Keen discussions were going on, but endless speculation had led to endless variance. One might even say there had been a general collapse of the philosophies. Dogmatism there was in abundance; hair-splitting in abundance; but little more. Many had begun to ask, Is truth attainable? and a

general feeling of despondency would seem to have prevailed among thinking people. Buddha, as we conceive him, was a practical man, of good common sense and of great kindness of heart. He was no Brāhman, and probably he had no admiration for that selfish, ambitious caste; and he must have been wearied with their speculations, which were equally endless and profitless.

Of Buddha's early history we know next to nothing. He lived in what is called a palace, was married, and had a son.

One would gladly trace—if it were possible—the course of thought that shaped his remarkable career. The chroniclers make it out that he adopted it suddenly—induced by certain spectacles of much suffering and sorrow. All this you may read, as it is told in a glowing style in the late Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia"; but it should be remembered that the historical value of the statement is exceedingly small.

We are told that at the age of twenty-nine Gotama (Buddha) could no longer rest in the enjoyment of his comforts. Wife and child, ease and honour, all failed to satisfy him. He felt himself compelled to "flee from the

gay world as from a glittering serpent"; he "preferred the yellow garment of the mendicant to the purple robe of state."

But where was he to go? Naturally, as a Hindu, he put himself under Brāhman instructors. He chose Rājagaha, and his *girus*, two learned men at Rājagaha. These no doubt inculcated the current philosophy of the age, which very probably was pantheistic. But the sacrifice of animals was also exceedingly prevalent, and there is little doubt it would be earnestly recommended. Pantheism and polytheism—both these great systems of thought would be scrutinised by Buddha, but in neither of them did the inquirer find any satisfaction. He is said to have remained under his two Brāhman preceptors for six years until, as we may presume, they could teach him nothing more. But Buddha remained dissatisfied.

There was, however, another discipline—much valued then, as it has been throughout the centuries—that of asceticism, or self-inflicted bodily pain. He therefore removed to another district; and there, in company with five others, he engaged in long fastings and severe bodily mortifications. So would

he crush, he thought, the hateful dominion of the body. But even the longest and most painful inflictions were of no more use than proud philosophy had been. He longed for light, and all was darkness. He therefore gave up this extreme asceticism and began to partake again of food like ordinary men, though this was to the sore disappointment of his self-torturing companions. He soon left them and retired into solitude. By this time Gotama seems to have finally parted with Hinduism. He felt he must therefore retire to think the matter out. We do not know how long his meditations lasted. The Buddhist books tell us of the powers of evil assailing him, determined to distract his mind and disturb his meditations. We understand this to mean that thoughts of former days and of wife and child occurred to him, and he half resolved to abandon all these vain attempts to "mitigate the fever of his heart" by unnatural means, and to return to ordinary life. But finally, it is said, the light dawned upon him, as he sat in deep thought under a particular tree which became famous as the Bo (Bodhi) Tree, or the "tree of knowledge." Yes, the victory was now won; and Gotama

became Buddha, or "the enlightened one"—the possessor of the highest wisdom—indeed, the possessor of all truth. He had by himself discovered the great secret, the answer to the terrible problem—the problem of ages,—*Whence evil, and why?* He now saw into the life of things, the cause of all the ills that afflict humanity, and also the means of completely overcoming them. So the books speak; but probably such wild language was not used till two or three centuries after his death. It was prompted by the sickly extravagance of his followers, which went on increasing for centuries.

When I come to mention what the doctrines of Buddhism are, you will ask, Where is the evidence of such supreme enlightenment? To us the fundamental teachings of Buddhism are only desolating paradoxes, and his other doctrines are at best only half truths.

And yet, let us do Buddha justice. It was not a small thing for a man of that age to break with Hinduism, both philosophical and popular, and to formulate a new system of thought and duty. It required considerable force of mind.

When he rejected both pantheism and

polytheism, he easily fell back into atheism. That doctrine was not new. One system of philosophy—the Sānkhya—stated that "the existence of God is not proved"; and it is possible that it may have in some degree influenced Buddha, though it does not seem to have largely affected his system of thought as a whole.

We are told that, after thus attaining supreme illumination, Buddha remained wrapped in deep meditation for twenty eight days, hardly tasting food all the time.

But what was he now to do? Was he simply to sit still in the quiet enjoyment of the boundless wisdom which he now enjoyed? No, he repelled the thought; indeed, he imagined he heard a voice saying, "Go forth and preach the truth to other men." He therefore first tried to find his two Brāhman teachers, but they were dead. Next he sought out the five ascetics whom he had forsaken, and found them at Benares, which was then, as now, the chief seat of Hindu learning. He preached there a sermon, which the books are said to present exactly as he delivered it. One main thing it insists on is the necessity of avoiding, on the one hand,

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sensual enjoyment, and on the other excessive bodily mortification. It very earnestly dwells also on the universal prevalence of suffering, and the necessity of renouncing the world, including all family ties. The ascetics, it is said, were convinced, and all became monks. Ere long, others joined them till there were sixty followers. These Buddha sent forth to proclaim the new doctrine. Each was to go a separate way, and he himself followed their example.

Here was a truly remarkable thing: Buddhism was from the outset a missionary system. And this was something entirely new—this proclamation of supposed truth to all ranks and conditions of men. Hinduism knew nothing of it.

How came this grand conception into Buddha's mind? It probably arose from his tender heart—from what, if we may ascribe passion to Buddha, we may call his passionate philanthropy.

Thereafter Buddha, during the dry season—eight months a year—moved from place to place. He seems to have traversed—almost always on foot—a region 300 miles long and 100 broad. He preached in the language of

the people—not in the difficult language of the Brāhmans.

In this work Buddha persevered up to his death. Surely, a touching spectacle! The high-minded, sorely bewildered man, preaching that dismal message of "No God," for five and forty years!

Even so passes finally from view what I take leave to call, although I do not see that he was a gloomy man—the most pathetic figure in all Indian history.

So far we have been dealing with the real or supposed facts of Buddha's life; I must now give some account of his teaching; and as I prepare to do so, there spreads out before me the immeasurable ocean of Buddhist metaphysical speculation. To render the doctrine intelligible is extremely difficult; to make it interesting is, I fear, impossible.

A fundamental part of the system lay in what are called the four noble truths. These are:—

1. All existence involves suffering.
2. Suffering arises from desire.
3. Suffering ceases when desire ceases.
4. There is a way to the extinction of desire.

This way is the so-called "noble eightfold path," which may be stated briefly thus:—

1. Right belief.
2. Right aspirations.
3. Right speech.
4. Right conduct.
5. Right living.
6. Right effort.
7. Right thought.
8. Right self-concentration, or rapture in meditation.

Of course, when "right belief" is spoken of, the meaning is belief, in accordance with Buddha's teaching.

There is frequent reference in Buddhist books to the "ten fetters," which must be broken by those who travel on the noble eight-fold path.

The first is the delusive belief of a *Self*. He must learn not to think *This is I* or *This is Mine*.

The second fetter to be broken is the fetter of doubt. Doubt is said to have eight forms —doubt of the teacher, doubt of his teaching, doubt of the order, and so on.

The third fetter is belief in the efficacy of

good works and ceremonies, as practised by the Brāhmans in Buddha's days.

The fourth fetter is Kāma—evil desire, especially bodily desire.

The fifth fetter is ill-will.

The sixth is desire to live on earth.

The seventh is desire for a future life in heaven.

The eighth is pride.

The ninth is self-righteousness.

The tenth is ignorance.

He who has travelled the noble eightfold path and has broken the ten fetters has entered on immeasurable peace—the life of the Arahat. This is a form of *Nirwāna* which is attainable on earth. It is not conscious existence; nor is it unconscious existence.

Buddha never spoke of God. He believed in gods, like other Hindus—gods who were imperfect and transitory beings; but he never spoke of a Creator, Preserver, Ruler, or Judge. He thought he could construct a theory of the universe without reference to any such Being. He saw no need, no place, for God.

It would be very interesting if we could trace the process of thought by which he

arrived at this terrible conclusion. I do not find that process stated anywhere; but we have reason to think that it was through no abstract, metaphysical speculation that he became an Atheist, or at least an Agnostic. It seems to have been all ultimately traceable to his excessive, indeed morbid, sensibility. Every form of suffering that Buddha witnesssed gave him torture. And yet suffering was all around—no living being, man or beast, could possibly escape it. Of all conceivable worlds this world seemed to him to be the worst. His creed was the *ne plus ultra* of pessimism.

The people around him believed in gods or spirits who were all jealous, capricious beings, ready to visit with terrible chastisement any want of respect to themselves. All of these beings were morally offensive to Buddha. He wished they did not exist: he could not believe they existed.

Nor did Brahmă—the god of the philosophers—satisfy him. He—or rather *It*—was a distant, dim abstraction, without even personality.

Suffering, Buddha thought, must be the result of evil. But even innocent children suffer, and in many cases die. Why, why?

The problem became only the more perplexing the longer he pondered it.

The great conception of suffering as discipline, never once occurred to Buddha. Suffering, he thought, was always *chastisement*—due chastisement.

This brings us to speak of Buddha's doctrine regarding man. *We* think of soul and body as united, but as perfectly capable of existing apart from each other. We think of soul as immortal. Not so thought Buddha. He held that man is composed of various elements. These are generally said to be five in number —earth, water, fire, air and ether, with a sixth, viz. consciousness. All these elements are dissolved at death; and then the man exists no longer. But a new set of elements at once starts into existence, consciousness among them, and a new man is produced. The man A has an exact equivalent in the man B; and the merit or demerit of A is transferred to B. This, of course, is flagrantly unjust. But it is evident that Buddha had a fixed determination to maintain the great doctrine of Moral Retribution. Good must be rewarded; evil must be punished; and this could be only in this extraordinary way—making B answerable for

the conduct of A, although the two individuals had not the slightest connection. Buddha thought he had solved the problem by saying that A had consciousness, and so had B,—although the consciousness of A was not the consciousness of B.

This leads us to the remarkable doctrine regarding *Karma*. *Karma* literally means work, conduct; but we may translate it *character*. It is held that every good work has merit, and is inevitably rewarded, and every bad work is inevitably punished. But the award may be either speedy or long delayed. Sometimes it comes during the life in which the work is performed; sometimes in the life following; sometimes generations, or perhaps ages, afterwards.

This is the form which the great doctrine of Transmigration assumes in Buddhism. There can of course be no real transmigration, since there is no soul to transmigrate. The soul, according to the Hindus, escapes from the body, like a bird escaping from its cage. According to the Buddhists there is no bird to escape.

And yet, it is truly remarkable that the Buddhists systematically speak as if the same

individual existed through successive births and as if the B we spoke of were really A. We can hardly believe that such reasoning as we have mentioned satisfied either Buddha himself or his followers. But without it, his whole system of thought falls at once into ruins.

In the "Questions of Milinda" the query of the identity of the being in the successive existences is taken up. The saint Nāgāsena affirms that it is not the same being and yet not a different being. Milinda asks him to explain. Nāgāsena replies that if you kindle a light it will go on burning through the night; but it is neither the same flame at the beginning and end, nor is it a different flame. It would seem that this passed as an intelligible and satisfactory statement.

In this sense Buddha himself had been frequently reborn at least 400 times. He had been almost everything in succession—a king, a lion, a cock, a pig, a thief—almost everything except a woman.

Salvation, according to the Buddhists, consists in *Nirvāna*. The word probably means the state of a light blown out. But does it imply only that all *passion* is extinguished, or

all *existence*? There is also *parinirvāna*—a condition beyond *nirvāna*; and logically we seem compelled to say regarding this, with Professor Childers, that "annihilation is the goal of Buddhism." Yet it is remarkable that Buddha himself repeatedly refused to pronounce any decision on the question. The reason he assigned for his reticence was singular; whatever answer he might give, wrong inferences, he said, would be drawn from his words. Many things, spoken apparently without hesitation by Buddha, are liable to the same objection; and the reason so given can hardly have been the true one. May we not believe that, while his reasoning all tended to the doctrine of extinction of being, his soul shrank from the awful thought? Let me, however, mention that, on the question of the meaning of *Nirvāna*, great authorities are ranged on opposite sides; and it seems well, on the whole, to follow Buddha's example and decline to pronounce decidedly.

An interesting question is, How did Buddha deal with Caste? Caste in Hinduism is of infinite importance; it has been called the body and soul of Hinduism. So far as we can see, Buddha did not directly attack it, he did

not in words oppose it; but he ignored it. "My law," said he, "is a law of grace for all." Rich and poor, high and low, all were received as brethren. Among the middle and lower castes this doubtless tended greatly to the popularity of his system.

But it is time to speak of Buddhist morality.

Buddha himself, we have every reason to think, was a man of pure life; and the moral precepts he laid down were unexceptionable—in fact, wonderfully like those of the second table of the decalogue.

Killing, stealing, adultery, lying and intoxication—all these things were forbidden. And yet probably even as Buddha himself gave them, these commandments ran to extremes. Thus, when killing is forbidden, the meaning is that all life is sacred, and that no living creature—not the most savage beast, or the most noxious serpent or insect—must be deprived of life. And so, when intoxication is forbidden, the meaning is that to taste a drop of anything that intoxicates is a deadly sin.

By and by other prohibitions were added in the case of the monks; though they were

not held absolutely binding in regard to the lay brethren (if that term may be used).

1. Not to eat after noon.

2. To abstain from public shows, as stage plays, etc.

3. To abstain from expensive dress, perfumes, etc.

4. To abstain from luxurious couches.

5. Not to receive gold or silver.

There were still higher restrictions for those whose hearts were set on attaining perfection. They must dress in rags, live only by begging, eat only once a day, live chiefly in forests, sheltered only by trees, often dwelling in tombs, and they must never lie down to sleep.

It is difficult to believe that the man who in earlier days, as we have seen, rejected asceticism, could impose such rules; they very probably came in only after Buddha's death.

We sometimes read of Buddhist *priests*. But the term priest is not suitable. He formed his disciples into fraternities of *monks* all living together. There was no trace of sacerdotalism in his system. The monks would give instruction out of the sacred books to any who desired it; but there was no fixed

time of meeting for worship. Properly speaking, indeed, there was no worship; and I believe Buddhism is the only so-called religion in which there is no prayer. The nearest approach to prayer is the threefold formula:—

I seek refuge in Buddha,
I seek refuge in the Law,
I seek refuge in the Order.

The monks then were not *clergy*. They exercised no spiritual superintendence over the community. Their great duty was to meditate. Every morning they went forth with their almsbowls, always clad in yellow garments. They must receive whatever alms might be given. The monks could indeed return to the world if they chose. But to abandon the monastic life was regarded as an immense fall, and a forfeiture of all hope of salvation.

No idea in Buddhism is more prominent than this—that the great thing to be acquired is *merit*; and the great means of acquiring merit is almsgiving to the monks.

Not at first, but after a considerable time, an order of nuns was also instituted. It is clear that Buddha hesitated about this step. But considering the position held by women in India (though it was by no means then so low

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as it afterwards became) the institution of the sisterhood of nuns was, on the whole, beneficial. Moreover, rich women were liberal in their gifts to Buddha and his followers. Women have considerably higher respect shown them in Buddhist than in Hindu communities. Thus, in Burma and Ceylon they move about with much greater freedom than is possible in India proper. At the same time, the nuns were kept in strict subjection to the monks; there were no lady-abbesses permitted.

It is evident that, even from the outset, Buddha attracted numbers of disciples. We can understand how the appearance, as a public teacher, of a man of rank—probably a nobleman—should have drawn disciples from among the middle and lower classes; there must have been a reaction against Brāhmanical sway. Yet he had also not a few Brāhman followers. What drew the people to him?

There seems nothing to attract but everything to repel, in the terrible negations Buddha inculcated. The attraction was mainly in the man himself—his gentleness and overflowing sympathy. And his memory continued to draw disciples after his death.

But by and by, other causes powerfully

helped in the diffusion of Buddhism. A great revolution took place in India. Chandragupta—the Sandracottus of the Greek writers—a man of low origin, usurped the throne of Magadha (Behar) and extended his sway over all Northern India. The Brāhmans would bitterly oppose him, on account of his caste; and this would make him look with favour upon the rival system of Buddhism. His grandson Aśoka, was a truly distinguished man—all things considered, as remarkable a ruler as India ever possessed. During his reign a third Buddhist Council was held; and a very important resolution was passed, viz. to extend Buddhism by sending missionaries forth to preach it. Aśoka also issued edicts which were inscribed on rocks and pillars; and these we still find scattered over Northern India, from the Indian Ocean to the Bay of Bengal, and from the Himalayas to the Vindhya mountains. There are thirty-six inscriptions, and they are the oldest inscriptions known in India.

Aśoka had been a great warrior; and in some of these inscriptions he expresses great regret on account of the blood-shedding he had occasioned. He now prohibits all murder of men and all slaughter of animals, whether

for sacrifice or food. He inculcates kindness and self-denial, and commands that every five years there shall be a great national confession of sin, *i.e.*, of the violation of Buddhist precepts.

All this is striking enough; but there is something more remarkable still. The son and daughter of the Emperor, it is said, went as missionaries to Ceylon; and there as missionaries they lived and died.[1] If this is true, I ask—is there in all history a more touching spectacle? It has a great lesson for Christians; may we lay that lesson to heart!

In addition to the two great influences of Buddha's personality and the zeal of Aśoka, there were several others which contributed to the spread of the new religion. One of these was the political state of India.

All foreign invaders were objects of abhorrence to the Brāhmans. The Persians must have been so; and when the Macedonians followed, even Alexander the Great was to them only an unclean barbarian. They strove to rouse the people against him; and Alexander retaliated with severity.

[1] How much, or how little, truth the tradition contains, cannot at present be determined with certainty.—*Professor Oldenberg*.

Afterwards there came into Northern India a succession of foreign invaders — Greco-Bactrians, Parthians and Scythians. All these were for many reasons vehemently disliked by the high-caste Hindus. Now the Buddhists had no such feeling, for they had no caste. They were eager to proselytise the invaders; and they were largely successful. Thus the invaders and the Buddhists soon understood each other and were mutually helpful.

We do not suppose that Aśoka would persecute; but the imperial patronage, as we have said, would mightily advance the cause of Buddhism. The monarch himself speaks of his own religious "zeal"; and the word probably implies a good deal.

Another thing must have had an influence; the Buddhists became great temple-builders. They paid attention, also, to the art of painting; and both their cave-temples and the edifices they reared—long before the Brāhmans had done anything of the kind—must have exercised no inconsiderable influence both on Hindus and foreigners.

As Buddhism spread more and more it effected very great changes in India. One of these was the effect on animal sacrifice. The

land had been swimming in blood—the blood of sacrificed animals,—but wherever Buddhism was powerful these sacrifices ceased. No doubt they continued in many places—both as a part of accredited Hinduism and as a remnant of the aboriginal worship.

Another great change was the cessation of the Soma offering. The intoxicating draught was no longer offered to the gods, nor was it drunk by the priests. In fact, by Hindus as well as Buddhists intoxication now came to be regarded as a heinous sin.

And yet Buddhism, though once so powerful in India, ere long faded away. It was not killed; it died. Local outbreaks against it there seem to have been here and there, but no general persecution can be traced. Why did it pass away?

One cause of this was the intellectual superiority of its opponents. Culture was with the Brāhmans. The Buddhists were generally ignorant men;[1] and in the frequent discussions which arose, they were doubtless almost always beaten in argument.

[1] A judicious critic (Barth) calls the Buddhist style "frightful, the most detestable of all styles."

Moreover, the Brāhmans recast their system, indeed, could not help recasting it. Hinduism assumed a form very different from its earlier one. The Brāhman controversialists were as unscrupulous as they were skilful. As a set-off against Buddha's tender humanity, which was so attractive, they introduced Rāma and Krishna, as incarnations of the great god Vishnu,—Rāma, a gallant warrior, and Krishna, the shepherd of Vrindāvan, sporting with the shepherdesses. In pourtraying the latter the Brāhmans appealed to the lower passions of our nature; and soon the moral Buddha was displaced by the immoral Krishna. The wily Brāhmans must have known that they were outraging all propriety; but what mattered that? Their object was to repel intrusive Buddhism, whether by fair means or foul. And there was something still worse. One of the incarnations was Buddha; Vishnu had descended from heaven and become Buddha; but for what purpose? As I have said in another Lecture, the god had descended to teach men error, and so lead them to destruction! I need hardly characterise this sentiment; it is the most dreadful thing that I know even in Hinduism.

Although the accessions to Buddhism were very numerous in consequence of the patronage of the Emperor, it is difficult to believe that there were many real converts. There was nothing attractive in Buddha's teaching. *No Supreme Being, no soul, no future life;* these are dreadful paradoxes, fitted to repel rather than attract; and probably they were only half believed at best. We need not wonder then that Hinduism—with some of its worst features removed—was able to rally and to regain its former sway.

Although Buddhism no longer exists in India proper, it has not disappeared from the surrounding countries into which the zeal of the early Buddhists carried it. Yes, the name survives; but the spirit of Buddhism has greatly changed, so that it has become, as some critics have said, actually "a new religion."

Regarding this far-extended Buddhism and its results, one is reminded of an opinion of Chevalier Bunsen's. He said it appeared like a dose of laudanum administered to the wilder races of Asia, in order to keep them quiet till the time was come to embrace Christianity. The thought is striking. Let us remember that, when the Turks issued from their fast-

nesses in High Asia, they came in contact not with Buddhists but Muhammadans and embraced the religion of the Qurān; and thus their natural ferocity was only rendered more intense in their dealing with men of other religions. Had they become Buddhists, the long and fearful record of wars and oppressions of which their history chiefly consists, could never have been written; and unspeakable suffering would have been spared both to Asia and to Europe.

Thus it exists in Nepal; but the Buddhists there believe in an Adi-Buddha (literally, primal Buddha), who is a real deity, possessed at least of some divine attributes. In China it is mixed with Confucianism and Taoism, and overflows with magic and superstition of every kind.

It has assumed many forms in Japan. Among these none seems to me so interesting as the *Sin shia* sect. A Buddhist professor in a great college there assured me that the ideas of this division—particularly regarding Amida Buddha (literally, the infinite Buddha),—could hardly be distinguished from our Christian conceptions regarding God. Undoubtedly Christianity is telling with greater

and greater power on the mind of Japan. The number of Christians among military and naval officers, members of parliament, and gentlemen connected with the press, is great and increasing. The latest missionary report we have seen—that of the American Board—speaks thus: "There is much inquiry on the part of students throughout the empire, and a much more friendly and cordial feeling towards Christianity as a religion. Many leading Japanese who make no profession of Christianity have publicly declared their belief that Christianity offers to Japan that which it most needs in the way of training for her people. The influence of Christianity is deepening and strengthening."[1]

At the present moment it looks as if the first of heathen lands to enter—as a nation—the fold of Christ would be the empire of the Rising Sun—Japan.

The most singular form that extra-Indian Buddhism has assumed is seen in Tibet and Mongolia. This is generally called Lamaism. It would require for its description a volume instead of the few sentences to which we must restrict ourselves.

[1] Report, pp. 4, 125.

Among the many peculiarities of Lamaism none is more striking than the mode of praying—or rather, what they call praying. There are six syllables which the people take to a prayer—*Om mani padme hum*.[1] This is certainly no invocation. These six syllables, uttered with great rapidity and endlessly repeated, are in every mouth. They are also inscribed on paper and enclosed in cylinders which can revolve. Thousands, or, it is said, even millions of times these words may be inscribed; and every revolution of the cylinder is equal to an oral repetition of the words. Surely, a most notable instance of prayer by machinery. A twirl—and the thing is done. Nobody knows the meaning of those syllables; but that is of no consequence. They form a magic spell—an incantation. For a moment the ludicrous aspect of the so-called prayer by clockwork is almost too much for our gravity. Yet a feeling of deep sorrow soon rushes in. We hardly know whether the sorrow will be lessened or increased when we are told by the well-known French missionaries, Huc and Gabet, of what they witnessed at Lhassa. They say: "There is a very touching custom at Lhassa. In the

[1] Literally—Om, the jewel in the lotus,—Hūm.

evening all the Tibetans—men, women, and children—meet in the principal parts of the town All kneel down and chaunt their prayers. These religious meetings produce a solemn harmony which powerfully affects the mind. The first time we witnessed the spectacle we could not help drawing a painful comparison between this heathen town and the cities of Europe, where people would blush to make the sign of the Cross in public."

So then, these poor Buddhists, who do not believe in God do yet believe in what they *call* prayer. They feel the necessity of it, and they try to pray. The heart then has a sense of need, it seems to be "feeling after God"—darkly groping we may say.

Hitherto Tibet has striven—and striven successfully—to exclude Christian teaching. Let us pray that the closed door may be opened, and that the people may soon learn what true prayer is—even the rising of the heart to a Living God.

Jainism

Although Buddhism does not now exist in India proper—and has not done so for about 800 years—there is still there a system closely

allied to it, called Jainism. The doctrines of the two religions are nearly the same; but the Jaina lays still more stress than Buddhism on the sacredness of all life. A fundamental maxim is this; Not to kill is to be supremely religious. Beast or bird—the most noxious insect—all must remain uninjured. The Jains are about one and a half million in number; but the community apparently is not increasing. They are divided into two great sections—the white-vested and the sky-vested. The latter seem to correspond to the "Gymnosophists"—the naked philosophers of whom the Greeks have written. But in modern days they appear to lay aside their garments only when taking food. The separation between the two sections may have occurred about the first Christian century. The sections neither intermarry, nor eat together.

The word Jina, from which the sect derives its name, means *conqueror*. It is the designation of Rishabha, the author of the system who is supposed to have lived many millions of years ago. His followers are called Arahat or holy ones.

The Jains are met with in many Indian towns—especially in the Panjāb, Rajputana, Gujarat, and Kanara.

The Jains are generally fairly wealthy. They are almost always engaged in commerce. They shun agriculture since turning up the soil is hurtful to many living creatures. Plants also have life and must not be deprived of it.

One truly remarkable characteristic of Jainism is its universality: it invites all men to adopt it, and even the lowest are welcome.

It was at first intended for ascetics only; but laymen could listen to the doctrine and to some extent obey it.

The asceticism recommended is inward as well as outward. Self-discipline and the purification of the mind are much insisted on. Repentance for evil done, confession to a teacher and humility—especially before all who held to be holy men: these things are also necessary, and the true Jain, it is believed, sometimes rises to a high moral character.

Of course the external asceticism runs into sad extravagance—such as begging, giving up savoury food, sitting in uneasy postures, fasting often carried to starvation: these teachers are highly valued. Indeed the perfect man—according to the sky-clothed Jaina—must not eat—he ought to die. The Jaina, on entering the order of monks, must give up all his possessions

and wander without a home, with his alms-dish in his hand, never staying, if possible, more than a night in one place. He must carry a straining cloth for the water he drinks, a broom, and a veil before his mouth, to avoid killing insects. He must rest during the rainy season, as animal and plant life are then specially abundant and vulnerable. He must pluck out all his hair. And he ought not to wash his body.

The Jain monk, left to himself, would have tried "to suppress the natural desire of man to worship." But the laity felt the need; and a kind of worship was introduced consisting of the offering of flowers and incense to the founder of Jainism, accompanied by hymns. The founder actually became a kind of deity—which was certainly an immense departure from the original tenet. Then monuments and temples came to be reared; and, as has been elsewhere mentioned, the most exquisite temples in India are those on Mount Abu in Rajputana.

Literary and scientific activity became also prominent. They wrote books on Prakrit, the language of the people, but they also studied Sanskrit to enable them to contend with the Brāhmans. They developed the

vernacular tongues Kanarese, Pamil and Pelugu.[1]

The former class—the white-vested—held a great Conference two years ago in Rajputana; and last year another in Bombay. About 5000 Jains—including, be it observed, 200 females—attended the meetings, which lasted for several days and were full of animation. Papers were read and resolutions passed. It was resolved to develop the religion on its original lines. This means, we presume, to resist all tendencies towards theism—for Jainism is decidedly atheistic. But the time-spirit affects even the Jains; and the Conference earnestly recommended the reform of various social customs—such as child-marriage, the practice of purchasing wives, extravagant expenditure on certain ceremonial occasions, and the beating of the breast at funerals.

[1] See Dr Bühler on the Jains; edited by Dr Burgess, 1902.

LECTURE FIFTH

MUHAMMADANISM

In treating of this religion it is necessary to dwell at considerable length on the life and character of its founder.

Everything shows that Muhammad, even in early youth, was much inclined to pensive meditation. One of his biographers describes him as sorrowful in temperament, restless, continually thinking. He was highly nervous, ardent, impassioned, imaginative; and he had many of the highest endowments of the Arab mind. The chief traits of his outward man were large, dark, lustrous eyes, middle height, strong build, voice musical and sonorous, mien and bearing majestic.

Muhammad appeared in a time of much mental agitation in Arabia. The old pagan faith was breaking up. Various new systems were pressing forward—Judaism, Christianity, several Christian heresies, Zoroastrianism—these and

other forms of belief were all present. There were public discussions in religion at the great annual fairs.

We have no difficulty, then, in seeing how Muhammad had his attention drawn to religion. Two journeys which he took into Christian Syria—one in his twelfth year, the other in his twenty-fifth—must also, to so inquiring a mind, have been variously suggestive.

A learned biographer, Sprenger, has said that "Islam was not the work of Muhammad, but the offspring of the spirit of the time." Sir William Muir, a high authority on Muhammadanism, rejects this view, and rightly holds that Islam owes its distinctive features to Muhammad's personality. Certainly, if the age supplied the materials, Muhammad was the skilled workman who fashioned them into shape; and the whole style of the building betrays the peculiar genius of the architect.

By the year 610, when about forty years of age, Muhammad had become still more abstracted and melancholy. Whole days were spent in solitary meditation in a wild region not far from Mecca. He now became greatly excited, and twice attempted suicide.

At the age of forty-four (A.D. 614) he

began to teach, but privately. He vehemently denounced idolatry. He had been a religious idolater; but he now abhorred the false divinities. His sanguine mind expected that his pleadings would be heard. But no; some smiled at his burning zeal; others treated him with scorn. When he ventured to denounce the tutelar deities of Mecca, he aroused vehement indignation. So the battle went on, Muhammad's lips shot forth fiery darts; but at best they struck only on granite rock.

He was through life intolerant of opposition, and the behaviour of his fellow-citizens not only threw him into mental agony but seriously affected his bodily health. From childhood he had been subject to occasional strange attacks of illness; and these now became frequent and violent. Sprenger says that he was for some time a complete maniac. He himself began to fear for his reason. "I hear a strange sound," said he, "I see a light; I fear the jinns (the evil spirits) are making sport of me."

Very conflicting opinions have been expressed regarding the character of Muhammad. The almost universally prevalent idea of Europeans has been decidedly unfavourable. He has been charged with consummate hypocrisy.

Even such tolerant men as Grotius and Scaliger held this opinion. The following quotation from a well-known book, White's "Bampton Lectures," will give a fair idea of the treatment that Muhammad has generally received even in recent days:—

"Eagerly ambitious of power, the Impostor determined to cover his deep and aspiring schemes under the specious veil of Divine Revelation. Hence, with a boldness of design that was exceeded only by the cunning that conducted it, he meditated a religion which, by flattering the corrupt passions and prejudices of each, might embrace in its ample and comprehensive law the Christian, the idolater, and the Jew" (p. 177).

These are ringing sentences; but the explanation they offer of Muhammad's character is not ours.

For a considerable time past, however, there has been a notable change—at least in many quarters; and, indeed, in some cases, language has been used regarding his whole character and career that seems to imply a forgetfulness of moral distinctions.

False from the outset Muhammad certainly was not; his fellow-townsmen had styled him

Al Amin, the truthful; and we can hardly believe that such a man could have been transformed into the boldest and basest of hypocrites. Four years of enthusiastic preaching had brought him only forty converts—several of them relatives, others slaves, or the poorest of the poor. When he pleaded passionately against idolatry, he was asked, "Why, then, does not God send a prophet to teach us?" Opposition was increasing; people were beginning to say, "If the fool cannot be laughed down, he must be crushed down by the strong hand." What! was idolatry to triumph, and the end of all his preaching and burning tears to be death or madness? Oh for the visible interposition of God on behalf of His own holy cause and His unhappy servant! What wonder if in a moment of high-wrought excitement, when reason reeled, he thought he saw the white-winged messenger for whose coming he had so vehemently longed and prayed?

Here is Muhammad's account of his first meeting with the angel Gabriel:—

> "He stood
> In the highest part of the horizon;
> Then he came nearer, and approached close,
> And he was at the distance of two bow-lengths, or even closer;

And he revealed to his servant what he revealed. . . .
His heart falsified not what he saw,—
What? will ye dispute with him as to what he saw?"[1]

It may have been a dream, or perhaps a vision in high-wrought ecstasy; but we can hardly doubt that Muhammad believed that he had, as he says, actually seen all this.

Now, surely, he thought, his countrymen would receive him as a divinely commissioned teacher. But they did not. It would seem that, on this, he was plunged into deeper melancholy than ever; and it is to this period that we may refer his attempts at suicide. The suspension of the so-called revelation is variously stated at six months or three years. To Muhammad, believing in his divine commission to restore "the faith of Abraham," it must have been a time of torture; and his denunciations of his opponents now became dreadfully severe. With the bitter disappointment there was equally bitter rage. I believe in a steady deterioration of Muhammad's character; and I think we may trace its commencement to this very trying period.

Of the later history of Muhammad a brief outline will suffice. He died at the age of

[1] Rudwell's Koran, p. 56.

sixty-two or sixty-three—twenty years after his first appearance as a preacher. Thirteen of these were spent at Mecca amidst manifold discouragements. At first the utterances were abrupt, enthusiastic, startling, sometimes truly poetical. The unity of God, the vanity of idols, his own apostleship, resurrection, judgment, paradise, hell—these were the topics chiefly insisted on. Paradise is painted as a region of gardens, vineyards, a flowing cup, and delights still grosser. Hell is described with all the stern realism of Dante's Inferno. The duties enjoined are faith, repentance, prayer, almsgiving, truthfulness, and honesty.

The preaching at first, though impassioned, was conciliatory; we might almost suspect that he had a secret doubt of his own commission. But after four years or so the tone begins to change. His assertion of authority becomes more vehement; he is not only a prophet, but the seal of the prophets—*i.e.* he seals up and closes the whole lofty line. There are curses also; there are terrible threats. Vengeance is at hand; and he exults in the approaching ruin of his foes.

Thirteen years were spent at Mecca.

It was in 622 that Muhammad fled from

Mecca to the city thenceforward called Medina —Medīnat al Nabi, "the city of the Prophet." From this date commences the era used in all Muhammadan lands—the Hijrah,—that is, the Flight.

Now Muhammad assumes the position of a great warrior-chieftain. Into the next ten years were crowded twenty-seven military expeditions, or, including smaller ones, forty. He was personally present in at least one great battle. His followers grew into an army which no power in Arabia could resist. He despatched embassies to announce his prophetic office to the King of Persia, the King of Abyssinia, the Viceroy of Egypt, and the Emperor of Constantinople. He was preparing for an attack on the last-mentioned monarch; but his force proved insufficient and turned back when it reached Damascus—half-way on its march. A mortal illness then seized him, and soon afterwards he died. During those ten years in Medina the character of Muhammad steadily changed to the worse. He became more selfish and cruel, and more abandoned to sensual indulgence.

One would be glad to know with what feelings this remarkable man met the King of

Terrors. We have traditions; but they were not collected till nearly two centuries after his death, and we cannot well trust them. We are told that he expired with such words on his lips as these: "O God, help me in the agony of death." "Eternity of Paradise; pardon." "The glorious companions on high."

On that deathbed we must gaze in awful silence.

It may be well to sum up here our impressions of Muhammad's character.

Intellectually he stood high; we may call him the great Arabian. He was both a warrior and a statesman. He was fully conscious of his capacities, and was a man of soaring ambition.

It has often struck me that Lucan's animated description of Julius Cæsar might answer for Muhammad.[1] I confess that this is giving him high praise, for Julius Cæsar was probably the very greatest of the ancient Romans.

Of his moral character I hardly care to speak. He was very revengeful, and many of his deeds were remorselessly cruel. His family arrangements I must also pass by. The only point on which one can dwell with com-

[1] Lucan, "Pharsalia," i. 145, etc.

placency, is that he never after her death forgot Khadijah, his first wife. Still, at the time of his own death, he had nine wives and two concubines.

The religious conceptions of Muhammad were exceedingly defective. To him Allah was only an almighty despot ruling a universe of slaves. He had little conception of the Divine love, and equally little of the evil of sin.

There was no translation of the Scriptures into Arabic; Muhammad was never really in contact with the Word of God. Instead of this, there was current the book called the "Gospel of the Infancy," which was full of fables.

Muhammad hated polytheism and idolatry. Regarding Christ no words ever passed his lips but those of the highest reverence. He called Jesus "the sinless prophet," a high designation which he never claimed for himself.

He rejected the doctrine of the Trinity; but, as then stated in Arabia, it was not the true doctrine of that great mystery.

He rejected also the great facts of the death and resurrection of Christ. We may well mourn over this, but we hardly wonder. To a man with so feeble a sense of the Divine

love and human sin, the doctrine of the Atonement must have been incredible.

I need not repeat what has been already said about Muhammad's fall. He probably never was a deeply conscientious man; and when the temptation was all the power and glory of the world, Muhammad yielded to the tempter. He fell, as ten thousands before and since have fallen.

Whether he was aware of his moral degradation, which went on increasing, is doubtful. It is probable that to the last he believed that it was right to do evil that good might come.

The spectacle is profoundly saddening. We condemn Muhammad. Yes, but what shall we say of the Christian Church that left him ignorant of the Bible? Alas, when we think what might have been! We cannot help believing that, if this remarkable man had only known the true Gospel, he might have become the Apostle of Arabia.

But before passing from Muhammad's life we ought to mention that he was not always in a state of excitement, when Gabriel, as he says, brought a revelation. He tells us that sometimes the angel came and spoke to him as one man speaks to another; "and this,"

he said, "is easy." What are we to make of this? We may suppose that Muhammad mistook a vivid dream for a reality. If such be not the explanation, it is difficult to free him from the charge of falsehood; and if this be the explanation, then Muhammad had fully adopted the ruinous belief that the end justifies the means. You remember that the Apostle says of those who hold that principle—"their damnation is just." But we are almost compelled to believe that Muhammad did adopt it. He knew he abhorred idolatry, and was jealous for the honour of God. He earnestly longed to see his countrymen worshipping only Allah; we believe that at one time he would willingly have died to secure that great end. He thought he had really seen the angel at least once; and if, to secure the reception of an important message, he should now say he had seen him when actually he had not, would it matter so very much? If it was taking some liberty with truth, God would surely forgive His servant for the sin—if, indeed, in the circumstances it was such. So he evidently believed. We all know—

> "by what unseen and unsuspected arts
> The serpent error twines round human hearts";

and the first case of conscious deception was a fatal error. It led to a steady hardening and degradation of Muhammad's soul.

Both by Muhammad and his followers the Qurān has always been regarded as a standing miracle. The orthodox belief is that it is eternal, uncreated, inscribed along with all the Divine decrees on a preserved tablet. A copy of this original was, on the "Night of Power," sent down to the lowest heaven; and this the angel is said to have brought part by part to Muhammad, during twenty-three years. Muhammad wrote down what the angel recited, and then dictated it to amanuenses.

European writers of all schools of thought have generally passed severe judgment on the Qurān. Luther most vehemently condemned it; and the wise and gentle Melanchthon, in speaking of it, became one-sided and harsh. Gibbon styles it "an endless incoherent rhapsody, of fable and precept and declamation, which sometimes crawls in the dust and sometimes is lost in the clouds." Carlyle, though he speaks too kindly of Muhammad himself—being moved by admiration of his force of character—has called it "a bewildered rhapsody; insupportable stupidity in short." Such

criticisms strike me as too severe. In the earliest chapters there is often a spark of poetry, and even in the later ones sometimes. Earnestness, at all events, is seldom wanting.

As for the style, its balanced clauses and rhyming assonances always charm the Arab ear; and to others, when they hear them chanted in a high-roofed mosque, the sonorous Arabic has a weird melody, as of the desert wind. As for the ideas, their range is exceedingly narrow. In reality there is nothing new. Much of Judaism, but not pure; a little of Christianity, not pure; something of old Arab paganism; a trace perhaps of Zoroastrianism; and some thoughts of his own—these things make up the Qurān.

There is a marked difference between the language used at Mecca and Medina respectively: Muhammadan writers themselves speak of the "two faces of the Qurān." But apart from this, contradictions are very frequent. Muhammad from time to time changed his plans; and, to meet the exigency, a new command from heaven was pleaded which abrogated one that had preceded. Muhammadan writers state that 225 verses were thus cancelled. He had to speak of the superseded

parts, and he puts these words into the angel's mouth, "Whatever verse we shall abrogate or cause thee to forget, we shall bring a better than it, or one like it" (Sona ii.).

The Muhammadan doctors divide religion into two parts, the dogmatic and the practical.

Under the former comes what must be believed concerning God, Angels, the Sacred Oracles, the Prophets, the Resurrection, the Judgment, and Predestination—six articles in all.

The practical part consists of five pillars or foundations—namely,

1. The recital of the Kalima or Creed.
2. Five times of daily prayer: before sunrise, at noon, before sunset, after sunset, and when night sets in.

All the prayers are recited in fixed forms of Arabic words.

3. The thirty days' fast, *i.e.* during the month of Rāmazān.
4. Almsgiving.
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca.

I may also give the creed. It is brief. "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

It is the boast of the Muhammadans that

they, more clearly and emphatically than any other religionists, assert the unity of God. It is a theological question how far the bald deism of the Qurān and its stern denial of the Divine Sonship renders the true God inconceivable. At all events, the Muhammadan conception of Allah is grievously imperfect. Sovereignty and power—these two attributes throw all the rest into the shade. The book never speaks either of the love *of* God or of love *to* God. Homage is what Allah demands, not love. Man made in the image of God and capable of intercourse with God, as a child with a father—this is a conception which Muhammad would have passionately denounced. Holiness is most imperfectly conceived. Divine mercy is often mentioned; but it is a mercy which, when the prescribed worship is observed, passes easily over the grossest sins. It follows that the idea of Sin is most imperfect.

Such searchings of heart as abound in the Bible are unknown to the Qurān.

Communion with God in the biblical sense is hardly understood, and prayer is little more than praise. It is not so much a mental as a mechanical act.

Perhaps these remarks may be thought severe, but far severer criticisms could be quoted from many well-informed writers. Thus the traveller Palgrave, who mixed freely with Muhammadans for many years, declares that the Muhammadan conceptions of God are "monstrous and blasphemous." The Arab Bedouins of whom Palgrave speaks are not a religious people, and their conceptions are not all traceable to the Qurān. The ideas are Arabian, but not necessarily Muhammadan.

The evils resulting from the pilgrimage, which it is a mortal sin wholly to neglect if one is physically equal to it, are immensely great. Had the faith been confined to Arabia, the effects would have been less serious; but when Islam had extended over Asia and a large part of Africa, they became truly disastrous. Immense physical suffering is connected with the pilgrimage. Plague often breaks out and spreads from Mecca as a centre; and if the European powers could stop the pilgrimage without arousing the whole Moslem world, they would gladly do so.

And what are the observances binding on the pilgrims? In pilgrim garb they walk seven times round the sacred mosque; they kiss the

black stone seven times; they drink of the water—intensely brackish—of the well of Zemzem; they shave their heads, pare their nails, and have their hair and nails buried. They then ascend Mount Arafat and throw showers of stones at three pillars. This is understood to be stoning the devil.

Nearly every regulation regarding one-half of the human race—I mean woman—is supremely objectionable. Family life is destroyed, and society is poisoned at its fountain-head. The Muhammadan is allowed four legitimate wives, with divorce at pleasure.[1] One of Muhammad's grandsons divorced eighty wives in succession. What we call illegitimate wives may be in any number. In practice women are excluded from public worship. The Qurān indeed is silent on the subject; but the prohibition flowed naturally—indeed inevitably—from the conception of woman presented in the Qurān. The women must be kept in with bolts and bars. I need not dwell on the miserable folly of all this.

Slavery is also fully sanctioned; a man may have as many slaves as he can acquire or retain; and all these unhappy creatures,

[1] With some restriction as to property.

whether men or women, are entirely at his mercy.

It is the bounden duty of every Muhammadan to do his utmost to extend the faith. Three things are offered to unbelieving races—conversion, tribute, or death. If Muhammadan nations do not still deluge the world with blood, it is because they are unable to carry out Muhammad's command. He declares that the angel thus addressed him: "O Prophet, make war on the infidels and hypocrites, and treat them severely. Hell is their portion, and rough is the passage to it. Not until Anti-Christ shall come must war for the extension of the faith be allowed to cease."

Apostasy from Islam involves death, and that doom is inevitable in most Moslem countries. In Turkey the European powers have extorted concessions that may—at least in the great cities—save the convert's life. But all depends on the Sultan.

It has been said by some that Islam, with all its faults, elevates degraded races and helps on the civilisation of the world. Doubtless Islam is better than the horrible demonolatries existing in some parts of Africa, according to which there is no splendour in any "custom"

unless human blood flow in streams; and cannibals, of course, are raised by accepting Islam. But if it raises them to a certain elevation, it fixes them there; and then it is infinitely difficult to move them a single step higher. For one mark of the Qurān is said to be *finality*, and to improve on the legislation of Muhammad is like correcting Heaven.

About a year ago a great conflict was raging in Morocco; the struggle was not really between two men—the Sultan and the Pretender—but between two principles, Reform and stern Conservatism. The Sultan has adopted some European ideas and wishes to reduce them to practice; but the great body of the chiefs abhor all innovation and seem prepared to die rather than accept it. They insist on retaining their chains and dungeons and power to torture. The Qurān ties men down to the Arab semi-civilisation of the seventh century. We are in the twentieth; and the difference between the two positions is measureless!

At an early period Paradise was promised to him who fell fighting for the faith. The Arabs of the desert are capable of deeds of splendid valour; and, with such an assurance

as this, no wonder if they rush on the point of the spear, courting death even more than victory. Paradise—and such a paradise!—and won so easily! It turns the coward into a hero, or, I should rather say, into an incarnate fury. No wonder if the trained legions of the Eastern Empire gave way before the irresistible rush of men all panting for instant transmission to delights that far surpassed any joy this earth could offer.

One remarkable characteristic of Muhammadans, as has been said, is this: every one of them is possessed of proselytising zeal. An Arab trader, for example, on his travels, is probably a keen man of business; but wherever he goes, he seeks to gain converts to the faith. He may be only a worldly man and quite capable of what we call very sharp practice; but in this sense he is a religious man—he is zealous for the extension of Islam. Herein surely there is a remarkable difference between him and a worldly European. The European perhaps even sneers at conversion; but at all events he takes no part in proselytising. Whence this striking difference? The question, I think, could be answered; but I will leave it with my readers as an interesting problem.

Muhammadanism is widely extended, and we sometimes see this referred to as a proof of its adaptation to human nature. The real causes of its rapid and wide extension are frequently forgotten; and it may be well to dwell on these at some length. Of Muhammad's own wars we have already spoken. On his death most of the Arab tribes broke loose from their allegiance. Only three remained faithful, and the very existence of Islam was seriously imperilled. Two able men, however, were unshaken in their fidelity; and the skill of Abu Baqr and the valour of Khalid overcame the terrible danger. Tribe after tribe was either won over by persuasion or subdued by force. Still, there was only one means by which their attachment to Islam could be secured; and of that means the prudence of Abu Baqr at once availed itself. He held up before the tribes the prospect of immeasurable spoil. He showed them that the world was all before them, to subdue for God and the Prophet—or, in other words, for themselves.

Had some commanding mind—another Attila, Gengis Khan, or Napoleon—arisen at this juncture in Arabia and succeeded in

rallying its tribes beneath his banner—even had he made no pretension to a commission from Heaven, it is in the highest degree probable that we should still have witnessed the same overpowering rush of Arab victory as history actually records. Everything favoured the sons of the desert. Fierce, hardy, tameless, deeming all that the strong hand could win to be honourable spoil, it was only intestine strife that had so long kept them pent up within their barren country. Broad, fair lands were before them, tenanted by races physically their inferiors, and for the most part slothful and unwarlike. On the other hand the Arabs were experienced warriors, making up for what might be wanting in discipline by fiery valour. From childhood they had been familiar with the bow, the lance, and the scimitar; they were more at home in the saddle than the tent, and their lives had been largely spent in planning and executing military inroads.

Two great empires then divided Asia between them as far eastward as the river Indus—those of Constantinople and Persia. Persia, in the middle of the third century, had to a large extent recovered its ancient

dominion and had restored the Zoroastrian faith; but in the course of four centuries it had fallen into anarchy. The reigning prince was a boy of sixteen. The later Greek Empire exhibited a spectacle no less woful. All the errors and vices that marked the decline of the Western Empire were reproduced in the Eastern, with but few traces of that valour that had, from time to time, flashed forth as the ancient Roman greatness slowly faded away. Moreover, religious strife had become inflamed into bitter rancour. The strongest party was that of the Melchites or Royalists, who called themselves Catholics or Orthodox; but there were many sects—Monophysites, Nestorians, and others. The fearfully weakening effect of their dissensions will be appreciated from the circumstance that the Copts of Egypt sided with the Muhammadans on their invasion of Egypt, hailing them as deliverers from the intolerable oppression of the Royalist party.

Everything, then, favoured the impetuous Arabs as they fretted to be let loose. The word was given, and immediately one army was on its march northward to Christian Syria, and another eastward to Zoroastrian Persia.

Both countries were easy conquests; in the one case the sumless wealth of Persia was a splendid prize, and in the other the capture of Jerusalem was esteemed a still higher recompense, and it raised the spirit of the Arabs to fever heat. Egypt fell next; then Tripoli; and then, in the course of half a century, all Northern Africa was subdued. Thereafter the unquenchable ardour of the Moslems carried them across the Straits of Gibraltar, and the beginning of the eighth century saw them masters of the larger part of Spain. It was little more than a century after the death of Muhammad when the great wave that had rolled on unchecked to submerge all Western Europe reached its furthest limit. Near the city of Tours, on the banks of the Loire, the mighty Saracen host of Abd-ur-rahman was crushed, after a conflict of seven days, by Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne.

The naval battles and conquests of the Muhammadans were hardly less remarkable. Their fleets floated triumphant in the Mediterranean. Crete and Sicily were wholly subdued, with a great part of Corsica, Sardinia, and Southern Italy.

Such and so potent was the lust of conquest

—for I repeat that the lust of conquest was the great impelling power.

True, these were, in a sense, religious wars. The Moslems thought they were obeying Allah when they subdued or slaughtered the infidel.

There has been thrown around the Caliphat and the Saracenic kingdoms generally—for the vast structure soon broke into fragments—a golden atmosphere of romance; but when we calmly inquire what the early Moslem dominion really was, and what the Saracens accomplished of good for the human race, the splendour dies at once. There was one century of headlong valour and brilliant conquest; another century followed of stagnation and precarious dominion; and a third of rapid and irretrievable decay.

I may perhaps be reminded of what some Christian lands have done to extend their religion by war and bloodshed. With this I have nothing to do; my object has been to remind you how different from the military propagation of Muhammadanism was the mode in which the early Gospel was extended.

The feeling of the Moslem towards men of other creeds has all along been one of mingled

hatred and contempt. The history of India almost proves that the Moslems there never forgot the principle enunciated by the prime minister of the great conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni, viz., that it was "not needful to have mercy on a pagan idolater." Incidents like the following were frequently occurring,—Hindus put to death for disputing with Muhammadans on religion; idols broken in pieces; temples destroyed; prohibitions of Hindu worship, processions, or oblations; forced conversions; forced marriages—men in power seizing on the wives and daughters of idolaters at their pleasure; proscriptions; confiscations; murders;—and these horrors so frequent, that the Moslem historian hardly pauses to express either condemnation or regret.

A daily prayer which the pupils are taught to offer in the Cairo schools is as follows: "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful: O God, destroy the infidels and polytheists, Thine enemies and the enemies of Thy religion. Make their children orphans and defile their homes; cause their feet to slip. Give them and their families, their households, and their women and their children and their brethren and their friends and their

possessions and their wealth and their lands as booty to the Moslems, O Thou Lord of all creatures."[1]

But I must pass on to notice the present condition of Muhammadanism in India.

The Muhammadan population of India, according to the last census, is 63 millions. Their number is increasing, though not by any means so rapidly as the Christians are. In former days Islam was extended in India mainly by force, by the wars of such conquerors as Mahmud of Ghazni and the persecution of such tyrants as Aurungzeb and Tippoo Sultan. In our day the gains of Islam—like those of Christianity—are mainly from the wilder tribes, the hill and forest races.

Indian Muhammadans have been slowly coming down in rank. Both Hindus and Pārsīs eagerly avail themselves of the existing means of English education. But not so the Moslems. They have usually professed to despise the English language and literature, which cannot compare for a moment, they think, with those of the Arabs and Persians. Moreover, they dislike mission schools because

[1] See Lane's "Egyptians."

they teach Christianity, while Government schools are almost equally objectionable because they teach no religion. But the conviction has gradually sprung up that English education is a necessity. This is an important change, and fraught with other changes.

All along, for at least fifty years past, there has been earnest discussion on the subject of religion between Christian missionaries and Muhammadans, and the advocates of Islam have been sorely perplexed in their attempts to defend their traditional beliefs. They have been in many cases compelled to explain away essential portions of these; and, among a considerable number, a rationalistic Muhammadanism has been steadily extending.

Meanwhile missions have been pushing on; and even the Muhammadan women begin to ask why, when the foreign ladies are so diligent among Hindu women, they should not also visit Moslem women. Altogether, there is a large amount of agitation on the subject of religion among Indian Muhammadans. Tracts are published in support of the Qurān, and preachers are sent out to defend it.

In Amritsar a society has been established "to help new converts to Islam," which

appears to us simply a barefaced attempt at bribery. If the Muhammadans will pay for converts, they can no doubt get them in abundance.

Meantime there is not only the rationalised Islam we have spoken of, but a movement has occurred in the Punjaub which every sincere Musalman condemns as utterly heterodox. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian proclaims that he is not only the great expected Mahdi who comes before the end of the world, but also the Messiah of this generation. This man opposes orthodox Islam, but he opposes Christianity even more. Jesus, he says, was a prophet; but he himself is a greater prophet. The Mirza is a person of wealth, and circulates many publications in support of his views. He claims to have 50,000 followers, but the real number may be 10,000. Among these, however, we find to our surprise some men of education and standing. They are sick of the errors and evils of Islam; and not knowing Christianity, they for the present have turned to this man, who professes his determination to reform religion. The explanation is to be found in the general unrest of educated Muhammadans in India.

A very interesting experiment has been going on at Aligarh in Northern India. Sir Sayad Ahmad, a man of no small enlightenment, founded a college there, in which, along with what he deemed a due respect for Islam and its teachings, there should at the same time be given a good European education. The new college was lately visited by an Educational Commission appointed by Government, which gave in a decidedly favourable report of the arrangements and working of the classes. English, Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit are the languages studied; and the course is fairly complete, including mathematics, physical science, Muhammadan law, history, logic, and political science. There are in all thirteen professors. The famous University of Al-Azhar in Cairo will bear no comparison in its range of study with this of Aligarh. Pupils attend to the number of about 600, and they are very likely to increase; for, on the whole, the new college is popular. It is simply impossible that under the instruction they receive, the pupils can long retain the intense bigotry and narrowness that have hitherto characterised Indian Muhammadans. Sir Sayad himself was a rationalist who did not estimate

the inspiration of Muhammad as higher than that of any great poet; and we understand that the entire spirit at Aligarh is similarly rationalistic.[1] If the college continues to prosper—as it seems likely to do—an immense change must gradually take place in the Muhammadanism of India. In no other country will Islam assume a similar form, at least for many years to come. Christian missionaries ought to be aware of the present critical position of affairs. The unrest and agitation among Muhammadans in India are certain to increase. Missions, I am persuaded, ought to pay a larger proportional attention to Muhammadans than they have yet done. Yes, let them more earnestly hold up before the eye of the distracted Moslem the great commanding form of Him who said, "I am the light of the world."

It is a solemn fact that Islam is still advancing in India and elsewhere. The command of the Qurān to fight for the extension of the faith is held to be still binding. In some parts of Africa war is probably always going on; only when obedience to the command would involve

[1] It has considerable resemblance to the Motazalite heresy which arose in the time of the Caliph Al-Mamun.

a conflict with any great European power, the risk is seldom run.

Scattered over the Muhammadan world, however, there are religious orders, corresponding to the monastic orders of the Church of Rome, which exercise immense power over the people. Some of these date from the time of Muhammad himself. There are eighty-eight of them in all, and new fraternities continue to be formed. By far the most formidable of these bodies is the Sanusiyah Order, founded by Ali bin Sanusi in 1791.[1] Since then it has spread very rapidly; and the Sanusis themselves boast of now being eight millions of men. They are bitterly opposed to Christians and the extension of Christian power. But meantime Russia has extinguished the khanates in Central Asia, and Britain has seized on Aden; in Africa France rules Algeria and controls Morocco; Britain controls Egypt and much of the Soudan, and Italy and Germany have claimed portions of the true believers' territory. All this the Sanusis most deeply resent.

They have chosen a region in the Libyan desert between Egypt and Tripoli, about 400 miles inland. They have a college, a fortress,

[1] Some say 1837.

a monastery with a mosque, and many fine buildings connected with it. The cloud is steadily gathering. These men are thoroughly in earnest; and although as yet they have hesitated to measure swords with Europe, it seems hardly possible that the conflict can be long delayed. Let our politicians look to it! The danger is very real. The cloud may any day burst in lightning and tempest over Asia, Africa, and even Europe.

But it may be asked why the Moslems should not gradually become civilised. We may probably be reminded of Spain and the civilization of the Moors. We may be told also that France has done really a great work in Algeria, and that Britain expects to do the same in Egypt. Well, let us hope. But meantime let us remember that the measure of culture which Muhammadan Spain possessed never grew out of Islam, but was rather a reaction against it. The one great philosopher whom the Spanish Muhammadans produced, Averroes (as his name was Latinised), broke away from the Qurān, was excommunicated and banished. To expect that Muhammadans will become truly civilised is to expect that they will cease to be Muhammadans.

What, then, of the future of Muhammadanism? Two hundred millions—an eighth part of the human race—are at present under its sway; how long is that iron sway likely to endure?

Mr Bryce, M.P., who is a diligent student of history, has said, if I mistake not, that Muhammadanism will probably pass away in two hundred years. The question is large and complex; and, even if I had power to grapple with it, no space remains to do so. But I venture to say a few words regarding the probable duration of Muhammadanism in India.

Of course it can no longer be extended by the sword or by such merciless tyranny as was exercised under Aurangzib or Tippoo Sultan. Nor will the great body of Muhammadans in India remain the same hard, harsh, repellent mass as it has been hitherto. It will share more and more in the general education of India; and bitter prejudices, grounded on sheer ignorance, will gradually be mitigated or removed. Muhammadan intolerance will gradually, but perhaps very slowly, die out in India.

Still ampler results may be expected in the case of the well-educated Muhammadans. It

is probable that they will continue to take pride, in a certain sense and degree, in Muhammad as one of the great names in history. They will class him with such illustrious men as Alexander of Macedon or Julius Cæsar. But that they should continue to believe in his apostolate, is inconceivable. There are many subjects on which every truly educated man must vehemently reject the teachings of the Qurān—for example, its permission of polygamy, divorce at the husband's pleasure, slavery, and the propagation of the faith by the sword.

Under the sway of Islam a vast mass of mind has been lying, we may say, for ages spellbound. When restored to light and liberty it will contribute its share to the progress of human knowledge, and on certain subjects may enter into rivalry with the European mind. Such men are certain to be anathematised from Mecca, as Sir Sayad Ahmad has been; but the ban will lie lightly on them, and perhaps be accepted as a certificate of merit.

On the whole, then, I am full of hope in regard to Indian Muhammadanism. That hope is grounded on two suppositions. First, that Divine Providence will permit the British

suzerainty still to endure; and secondly, that the missions in India will be full of sympathy and exercise no small patience with the Muhammadan mind, as it gradually disentangles itself from the deep prejudices of ages. Let all Christian controversy be kindly in spirit.

Of the future of Muhammadanism elsewhere we can say little. Turkey, as long as it is allowed to last, will probably remain what it has been all along, grossly bigoted and cruel. The "third great Canning," as Tennyson called Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, "the great Elchi" (ambassador), as both Turks and Christians named him, used these words: "As a matter of *humanity* I wish with all my soul that the Sultan were driven, bag and baggage, into the heart of Asia." Eighty years and more have passed since these words were used, and fresh horrors have been enacted by the Turk. But the time must come for his leaving; and when it does, we shall all heartily "speed the parting guest."

We see no prospect of internal reform in Persia.

Even so in other lands there appears no hope of improvement. Muhammadan states now every-

where feel European powers pressing in upon them. I believe the uniform idea of Moslems is that they must not languish to extinction, like a sick man taking to his bed and quietly yielding up the ghost. He does not acknowledge he is now about to die; but when that time does come, the Moslem will probably fling his whole remaining strength into one supreme effort and perish sword in hand.

Note on Muhammadanism

The Shiah Muhammadans assert that ten sections—about one-fourth part of the whole—were struck out of the Qurān by Othman. Yet on the whole there is reason to believe that the book stands now nearly as Muhammad left it. The arrangement of the chapters was not made by Muhammad. But in truth, although probably every verse is genuine, yet the book itself is a perfect chaos, not the slightest attention to chronology having been paid in the arrangement of the chapters. Many of those which should have stood at the beginning have been thrown to the end of the book. These are among the best parts of the book.

Muhammadan theologians speak of two kinds of inspiration—a higher and a lower—*wahi* and *iltram*. The inspiration of the Qurān is *waki*. Its words are held to be in the strictest sense the words of God.

It seems to be taken for granted by some writers that the Qurān alone is the rule of faith. This is a serious mistake. There are four "pillars" of Islam: (1) the Qurān; (2) the traditions regarding the sayings and doings of Muhammad; (3) the unanimous consent of the learned doctors; and (4) analogical reasoning of the learned as to the precepts and practice of the Prophet.

One great division of the Muhammadans claims the title of *Sunni* or traditionists. There are six standard collections of the traditions they accept. The Shiahs reject all of these, and substitute five other collections of their own.

The most famous collection of Sunni traditions is that of Bukhāri; but it was not compiled for fully two centuries after the death of Muhammad. Out of an immense number which Bukhāri selected, 7275 are probably authentic. But oral traditions may change immensely in the course of two centuries.

There are several points in which the teaching of Muhammad himself greatly differs from that of his followers.

1. In the Qurān the sinful acts of many of the prophets are mentioned; and in several passages Muhammad is commanded to ask pardon for his personal sins.

But his followers—at least in India—contend that Muhammad was sinless.

2. Muhammad himself, in his frequent references to the Scriptures, both Jewish and Christian, uses language of the highest possible reverence.

His followers, on the contrary, have brought various accusations against them. Some assert that the true Scriptures have been lost. Others maintain that they have been abrogated or set aside. And others assert that they have been corrupted by the Christians, that is, that the true text has been designedly set aside.

Sufiism

A few words must be said about Sufiism. The word may be derived from the Greek σοφος, wise; though the Muhammadans do not generally admit this.

Sufiism is mysticism, ready to pass into pantheism ; , it probably has been greatly influenced by the Vedānta, or pantheistic philosophy of India.

It holds that the great duty of the human soul is to go in quest of God.

It must begin with *service*, then it rises to *love* ; next to *seclusion*, in which it thinks only of God ; the fourth attainment is *knowledge* ; the fifth, *ecstasy* ; the sixth, *truth* ; the seventh, *union with God* ; the last, *extinction*.

Many of the Sufis are thoroughly in earnest, and deserve our deepest sympathy.

Controversy on Muhammadanism

More than two centuries ago, Marracci, who translated the Qurān into Latin, complained thus : *Contra Mahometum qui scripserunt sive ex antiquioribus sive recentioribus sunt pauci, ne dicam paucissimi.*

In the Eastern Church the most distinguished opponent of Islam was Joannes Damascenus in the eighth century. Another was Enthymues Zigabenus, who died in 1118.

One of the famous "Aberdeen doctors," John Forbes of Corse, in 1646 devoted to the

subject of Muhammadanism one book of his work "Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ."

Among the opponents of Muhammadanism none deserves a higher place than Raymond Lull or Lully. He was distinguished both in science and philosophy. He became a most enthusiastic missionary to the Muhammadans and died a martyr's death. In 1311 he proposed at the Council of Vienna that missionary colleges should be established in the Universities of Paris, Salamanca, and Oxford. Originally the professorships of Arabic in these universities were missionary professorships.

Of recent works those of Sir William Muir and Dr Sprenger—the latter in German—will be found very valuable.

LECTURE SIXTH

THE RELIGION OF THE WILDER RACES

When the Aryans, or Hindus, entered India from across the Himalayas—probably more than 4000 years ago—the land was no doubt to a large extent covered with forests; but it was not uninhabited. The Aryans were at once brought into contact with a race which they called *Dasyus*, and which they scornfully described as "black-skinned," "noseless," "godless," and even "speechless." That is to say, they were darker than the white-skinned Aryans, but they certainly were not negroes; they had noses, though not high Roman noses; they were not "speechless"; nor were they "godless," though they differed from the Aryan invaders in speech and religion. Battles ensued; those of the aborigines who would not yield to the invaders were by and by driven off into the wilder parts of the country, and the rest were trampled down into slavery.

These last are frequently spoken of as "Hill and Forest races," though that designation hardly befits those who yielded to the invader and remained in their old seats.

The religion of these races may generally be described as *Animism*. This name is derived from the Latin word *Animus*, *i.e. spirit* or *soul*. Animism is *Spirit-worship*.

It is very widely diffused, especially among the Turanian, or Tartar, races who are also frequently called Dravidian. Indeed, the belief in spirits seems instinctive. As children, I suppose we were all afraid of ghosts and believed in witches and fairies; and even when this has been nominally superseded by a higher system of thought, it often clings to the mind with amazing tenacity.

The following seven characteristics, generally though not universally, belong to Animism:—

1. A supreme, or at least superior, Being is acknowledged, though scarcely worshipped.

2. Other spirits are also acknowledged, which are almost all malignant, and have to be propitiated.

3. Bloody offerings are necessary, as at least a part of the propitiation.

4. Wild dances are performed in the worship.

5. Little importance is attached to idols, temples, or priests.

6. Possession by spirits is believed in.

7. Witchcraft is much practised.

These characteristics are found in the religions of the wilder tribes of India.

It is truly saddening to see how powerfully the darker features of spirit-worship have affected the minds of these races all over the country. The conception of a great and good Being, supreme over all others, seems never absolutely extinguished; but in many cases it becomes so vague, so shadowy, that careful inquirers have declared they could discover no trace of it. On the other hand, the belief in malevolent spirits is always distinct and strong. But often—nay usually—a great and good divinity *is* believed in. He is connected, generally, either with the sun or the moon. The multitude of stars around them is often understood to be the offspring of these two parents; though it is difficult to believe that this childish thought can be retained by grown up men, even among savages.

I have mentioned that the Supreme Being, though acknowledged, is scarcely worshipped. Perhaps *rarely* worshipped would be a more

accurate expression; for at distant intervals, offerings of white fowls or white goats seem to be made to him. But evil spirits—demons—are everywhere and always near us; demons of the waters, demons of the mountains, demons of the woods, demons of the house, etc., etc. The spirits of the dead are also at hand. All of these beings are powerful, jealous, sensitive, revengeful; and they are objects of unmitigated terror.

This universal belief in the presence and operation of evil powers—whence comes it? It has been traced to the influence of the position and circumstances of these poor people. The aborigines of India have for ages had a hard struggle for existence. Devastating floods, blighting droughts, tempests and whirlwinds far more destructive than any we experience in Europe; pestilences—whence come these fearful things? Who sends the wild beasts, tigers, serpents, and all the rest, that fill the forest? And who sends the still more cruel men that seem ever on the watch to rob and even slay? It is not the doing of God. He is good, and would never so deal with men. But fiends are all around—bent on mischief, with or without excuse. But

why does God permit them? Ah! who can tell? He may be very far away, and probably does not know. Anyhow, the fiends must be, if possible, appeased. Worship thus among the aborigines is the dictate simply of fear. So men worship the tiger and the serpent.

Surely, if the nations of the West believed in a religion like this, existence would become an intolerable burden, and suicide almost universal. How then can the poor aborigines of India bear up under it?

Most of them are by constitution cheerful, with little tendency to reflect, and with a childish carelessness about the future. When the sun shines cheerily, and food is plentiful, the poor natives are happy. Some of them—like the Santals and Uraons—are fond of music and dancing. And most, or alas! all of them, are ready to seek refuge from their calamities in drinking. But taking everything into account, their demonolatry presses upon them like a dreadful nightmare. A missionary once said that the belief reminded him of Milton's words—

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."

Yes, but what an agonising difference between the Native idea, and Milton's high conception of innumerable hosts in earth and heaven—

> "Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
> Singing their great Creator";

and in this high employment resting not day or night.

I am reminded of an incident that occurred in an old ruinous fort in Western India. Through a break in the seaward wall the breeze was beginning to play; and, tired with early work, I was resting quietly. A respectable-looking Native begged permission to speak to me: he had something to ask. "By all means speak," I said. "Well," said he, "I am astonished that you remain in this dreadful place, with only two attendants." He meant my cook and my horsekeeper. "What is the matter?" I asked. "Why," said the man, "the place is full of devils: how can you stay here during the night?" "Everything," I answered, "has been as quiet as possible; if there are devils, they are wonderfully well-behaved devils." "Ah!" said the man thoughtfully, "you are a European, and the devils are afraid to touch you." "Well," I

said, "but my cook is a native of Goa, and my horsekeeper is a Maratha; and then my horse, he is no European. Yet none of us has been disturbed; we have all slept quietly." "Ah!" replied the Hindu, "they are all under your protection, and the devils know it."

Of course on so good a text I preached a little sermon to the man, the purport of which will readily occur to my readers.

It was—if my memory serves me—very near that very place some time afterwards that the following scene was enacted. Let it be remembered that such startling celebrations are very frequent in India.

At midnight a wild chant arose outside the fort, funereal in its tone. One voice sang a few words; and then a multitude joined in chorus. Then came an invocation uttered by a body of Mhārs (low-caste people) marching in solemn procession into the fort, and inviting the spirits to come and receive the offerings. These consisted of pieces of flesh—probably that of a kid—the blood of which had been caught in a dish when the head was struck off. There were also bread and intoxicating liquor, in short, plenty of the food generally used by the Mhārs themselves, along with sugar, salt,

spices, opium and tobacco—all borne on brass or copper vessels, and guarded by men carrying naked swords and flaming torches. The entrails of the animal victims were wound round the necks of those who led the way. Then arose a most wild and unearthly cry—an invocation to the demons. The following words were shouted aloud, first in solo, then in chorus:

> Take some liver!
> Eat some bread!
> Taste the blood!

and as each article was mentioned, a portion of it was taken from the dish and flung forward —certain, as the people thought, to be pursued and caught by the crowd of hungry spirits that were eagerly looking on. After every two or three sentences the whole multitude joined in one loud shout—"Be propitious!"[1]

I daresay many people will not be prepared to learn that such exhibitions as these are still common in India. They are now mainly confined to the lowest castes among the Hindus and to the aborigines—the hill and forest races. But even the middle and higher castes believe that every wild scene in nature is

[1] See "Chowchow," by Lady Falkland.

haunted—is the abode of a spirit, which is almost certain to be malignant. And we must recollect that such was once the belief of our own people. If I remember aright, the old English traveller Sir John Mandeville very seldom refers to any place that is dark and gloomy or otherwise unattractive, but he adds: "And the whole place is full of devils."

I have been speaking of India; but it is well to remember that animism is the religion of the Tartar races generally, and that also in many particulars the African religions are the same. Thus Livingstone says: "The Africans acknowledge the Deity, but they hardly pray to Him. . . . They ascribe everything above human agency to unseen spirits." Livingstone also tells us that the slave, groaning under the tyranny of his master, exults in the belief that when he himself dies he will return to torment or kill his merciless oppressor. Among our Wild India races, however, the idea of a future state is generally very vague and shadowy.

The Shanars in Southern India are among the most interesting of the aboriginal races. They amount to about half a million. They retain an indistinct belief in a great Being

whom they call *Ruler* or *Lord*. They hardly admit, however, that the world was created by Him, and think that, if He governs it, His rule is very lax. But they fully believe in the existence and agency of spirits. These are watchful, jealous and revengeful, able and willing to punish all who offend them. They are especially propitiated by bloody sacrifices and wild dances.

When a dance is to take place a person must be chosen to enact the chief part of the ceremony, since there is no regular priesthood appointed to celebrate their worship. This chief performer may be either a man or a woman. First, a suitable dress must be put on: it is many-coloured, frightfully grotesque, with a multitude of small jingling bells. Drums, horns, clarionets, cymbals, are also introduced—more bells, and bells of all different sizes, and all sounding together, until there is a perfect roar of noise, enough to satisfy the ears of the most exacting demon. At first, the dance is slow, and the accompanying music is comparatively gentle. But the strain becomes quicker, louder, and the dancer becomes more and more excited. He now drinks a quantity of intoxicating liquor, lashes him-

self with a whip, cuts his flesh till the blood flows, and more dreadful still, drinks the blood of a decapitated kid. Now starting into fresh life, he flourishes his bells and dances round and round, moving quick, but almost staggering as if in the grasp of some oppressive power. Then suddenly he becomes inspired. He stares as if his eyes would start from their sockets, and whirls wildly round and round. Now the spirit has entered him, and he is wholly under the demon's power. Ask his name, and he gives the demon's name; his consciousness is entirely merged in that of the spirit. Now all around are eager to put questions. They ask about their children, their crops, their cattle, and whatever interests them most deeply. Answers are grunted out.

These terrible orgies are usually celebrated during the night. The sacred stillness of those glorious Indian evenings is suddenly broken in on by a hideous uproar—the beat of drums, the bray of horns, the clash of cymbals—a disturbance utterly out of keeping with the deep calm of nature, and doubly distressing when we remember by what it is to be accompanied.

Bloody offerings are a necessary part of this worship. Goats, sheep, and fowls—these are especially used. The goat or sheep is led to the altar, adorned with red ochre and garlands of flowers. A single stroke with a sharp knife severs the head from the body; if two blows are required, the sacrifice is not deemed acceptable. The blood is poured out on the altar. The body of the animal is cooked, and, after being offered to the demon, it forms part of a sacred feast which is shared by all who have joined in the celebration.

It is of importance to note that in these observances no reference is made to sin. The object is to appease the wrath of the demon, which arises from his having been too much overlooked, not from the commission of any moral offence. There is, however, also the idea of substitution. The sacrifices are very frequently offered in cases of sickness; and the demon is implored to accept the life of an animal instead of that of a human being.

Childish superstition is rife among all classes in India—rifest among the lowest. Thus in the dusk of the evening the demons are often supposed to be seen, especially in burning or burial grounds. They assume grotesque or dreadful

shapes, often changing these in succession. Or a sudden noise is heard. The people venture to look, and lo! there is the demon running off like a big dog, or perhaps like a cat, with eyes flaming like lamps. Or the demons are seen gliding over marshy ground, in the shape of an *ignis fatuus*. Small whirlwinds of dust are very common in the dry season: these move above and catch up dry leaves and straws and carry them up into the air. This is a mild form of the demon's play. Everything at all unusual is an indication of the presence and action of a dark unearthly being.

The temples of the demons are very poor erections. A heap of earth is raised in the form of a small pyramid, from five to eight feet high; it is ornamented with alternate streaks of red and white paint. This is both the dwelling and the image of the demon; at least there is generally no other image. A small heap of earth in front of this, flat on the top, forms the altar. In some cases the erection is of earth and overlaid with stucco.

Occasionally one of the lower Hindu gods, or probably a goddess, has been accepted by the aborigines. In such cases a regular image is erected. It is generally of earthenware

painted white, in order to render it more striking and ghastly. It has many hands, each holding some instrument of torture, and with a horrible mouth, the teeth of which are crushing an infant—or more than one—to death. In other cases, the image—when there is an image—probably has a buffalo's head, and the hands grasp a huge club. Near the temple there generally stands a tree—the larger the better—and if so, there will be the demon's dwelling place. From this the demon beholds the sacrifice; he snuffs with delight the odour of the flowing blood, and eagerly descends from the tree to share with the worshippers in the banquet that succeeds the sacrifice.

But the demons have many places of abode. Any place or thing that is fitted to inspire terror or disgust is almost certainly the abode of a demon. Gloomy shades, dark valleys, ruinous houses, solitary wastes—these are their chosen dwelling places. They roam abroad in the darkness; they are at work in the devastating gale, or the wild rushing flood; it is they that "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm," and, when the tempest roars in fury it is the shriek and howl of the demons which you hear.

All spirit-worshippers firmly believe in *possession* by devils. Any unusual disease, and any usual one which does not yield to the ordinary remedies, is ascribed to the presence of a demon. But he can be expelled from the human body; and there are many approved modes of exorcism. If these fail, a sound drubbing with shoe or stick, accompanied by torrents of foul abuse is almost always more than the most determined demon can stand. "I am going," cries a strange voice. The people cease beating, and ask his name, and the reason of his visit. He says he is such and such a demon, to whom they have, for a long time, paid no proper respect; and they must give him an offering. Or perhaps he says he is some deceased relative who has become a demon and must be gratified by a present. When the sacrifice and the sacrificial feast are prepared, the possessed man partakes and then awakes as from deep sleep or stupor, but professes to have no knowledge of what has taken place while the spirit was in him.

You are ready, I suppose, to call this professed ignorance only sheer pretence. But it is not always pretence. The man firmly believes in possession; and his imagination readily admits

the idea that his strange feelings are occasioned by a demon's presence. There are many people, not particularly credulous, who would hesitate to say there are no real cases of possession in India. For myself, I am at a loss—though I confess that all the cases that came under my observation might be explained either as cases of hypocrisy or of self-deception—generally the latter.

It is exceedingly probable, that among the Dravidian or Turanian races, human sacrifice was formerly far from uncommon. Even to our own day it prevailed to a deplorable extent among the Khonds (Kandhs), in the mountainous part of Orissa. It was in the year 1837 that the British came to know that a regular system of human sacrifice existed there—some offered by the community, some by individuals on their own account. Good crops and immunity from disease were held by the Khonds to be dependent on the awful rite. They did not knowingly offer either a Khond or a Brāhman; but, with these two exceptions, any man, woman, or child might be the victim.

The news was very startling; and Government at once appointed Captain John Campbell to investigate the matter, with full powers to

take steps to crush out the horrid practice. The book this officer wrote is before me as I write, and I simply abridge his distressing statement.

"The victims were offered to the earth-goddess Tari. They were generally procured from a distance. They might be either stolen or purchased. They were generally young people. They were brought up into the hills, and were treated—perhaps for years—with much kindness, bearing as they did an almost sacred character. Their fate was never mentioned to them. But by and by came the great celebration. A vast assembly was held for three days and given up to feasting and riot and wild dances. The victim was brought forward—opium or some intoxicating drug having rendered him insensible. He was anointed with oil, ghee, and carmine, and crowned with flowers. Then came an awful chaunt—a liturgy, horribly sublime. 'You are ours,' they shouted; 'we have bought you, and we offer you to the goddess.' The victim must die without a struggle; and to secure this, his limbs were broken; and he was generally fixed in a cleft tree. Each savage then rushed, knife in hand, upon him,

cut off a morsel of his flesh, and bore it away, dripping with blood, to his field and buried it there,—each saying, 'The goddess has now tasted human blood, and we shall have crops in plenty.'"

It is calculated that the number of these sacrifices annually was about one hundred and fifty. Thank God; they have ceased entirely.

It will be a great relief if we now turn to speak of a much higher tribe of aborigines. On the western side of the chain of mountains running from Cape Comorin to the northern borders of Travancore, there is a race, numbering about eighteen thousand souls, called generally Hill Arrians. They live on heights from two to three thousand feet above the sea level. They have the taste to select the most beautiful spots for their abode, residing generally in fixed villages. Many of them are well off, being prosperous cultivators of the slopes of the hills; and they hold a position equal to that of Muhammadans—which is one of some honour in that region.

When in Southern India I was deeply interested in hearing that these Hill Arrians had sent a deputation of their number to a C.M.S. missionary at Cottayam, on the plains,

some fifty miles distant, with a pressing request that he would set up schools for their children. The missionary's hands were full, and he did not respond to their request until five successive deputations had been sent. He then went to their hills. He received a most hearty welcome. Arrangements were made for *their* instruction, and in little more than two years a hundred and twenty asked for baptism; and soon more than two thousand had been baptised.

The most peculiar of the hill tribes is found on the Blue Mountains (Nilgiris) in Southern India. I refer to the Todas.[1] Who they originally were, or where they came from, is a perplexing question. Let me give the answer they returned to me when I asked them. "We have come from nowhere; our ancestors were created on these hills, and these hills belong to us."

Physically the Todas are a fine race—tall, well-formed, and athletic. The women are handsome and erect and would be pleasing if they had the gentleness of Hindu women. Both sexes are lively and laugh merrily on

[1] See the Rev. Mr Baker's striking account given in Mrs Murray Mitchell's book "In Southern India," p. 304.

the least occasion. They are occupied almost exclusively in the care of great herds of cattle—buffaloes. Men and women dress almost alike—wrapping themselves in large blankets. Cleanliness is not one of their virtues; they seem never to wash either their bodies or their clothes.

Their religion is a mystery. They have no images, but there is a buffalo-bell in each village to which libations of milk are made. Their great comprehensive prayer—or wish, rather—is this—"May all be well! may the buffaloes be well!" There is a head milkman who may be called a kind of priest. He lives alone with one attendant. No woman can approach the place, nor any man without express permission. Milking is a sacred work; and only this man can perform it. He places the milk in the dairy, which is in fact their only temple. The people live almost exclusively on milk, chiefly in the form of curd and ghee.

One weakness of the Todas is their love of presents; and they are shrewd enough to prefer white money very decidedly to black, as visitors soon discover.

I have now to speak of the Karens of Burma. The old traveller Marco Polo men-

tions them, but after his time they seem to have been long overlooked. They were hardly heard of again until 1828. They were then living among the mountains, shunning as far as possible all intercourse with the Burmese, by whom they had long been most cruelly treated.

It is difficult to say from what country they came; but it was probably from China. Their traditions mention that they had to cross a terrible river of sand. This would seem to be the great desert of Gobi, which remains very formidable to travellers up to this day.

The American Baptist Mission had been at work among the Burmese for a considerable time before they particularly noticed the wild people dwelling among the hills. One of the first converts was Ko Tha Byu. A Burman had enslaved him on account of debt, but Dr Judson restored him to freedom and employed him as a water-carrier. This man read a Christian tract in Burmese and was struck with the resemblance between its statements and the cherished traditions of his own people. He became a convert and a preacher; and through him the missionaries had their attention called to a field of labour which they had

hardly thought of, but which has proved most fruitful.

The traditions of the Karens bear a remarkable likeness to many of the statements of the Old Testament. The resemblance indeed is startling. Some would explain the coincidence by supposing that either in their original home or while on their way to Burma the Karens came in contact with Nestorian missionaries, who during the Middle Ages played so noble a part in the heart of Asia, and right away into the centre of China. But the Karen traditions, while marvellously like many things in the Old Testament, very seldom remind us of the New; and for this reason the Karens are generally supposed to have drawn them from Jewish sources. Some have inferred that they are really of Hebrew origin. They certainly seem to have been in close contact with a Hebrew race; and we know that there were Jewish colonies in China, from some of which we may suppose that the Karens derived their venerable traditions.

They do not worship idols. They acknowledge one great God, who, they say, is displeased and has withdrawn from them because they lost a holy book which He once gave

them. They worship *Nāths*, which are malignant spirits ever on the watch to do them harm if they fail in paying them due respect.

When the first converts saw the close resemblance which the statements of the Bible bore to their own traditions, they exclaimed: "These white foreigners have found our book and have brought it back to us." The preaching of the missionaries was therefore sought rather than shunned. In little more than two generations about a hundred thousand became Christians, and conversions still appear to be multiplying more and more rapidly. The entire Karen nation numbers about a million. Last year there seem to have been baptised two thousand one hundred and forty—all of them adults. The Church members amount to thirty-five thousand. It is right to mention that this very remarkable work among the Karens has been carried on mainly by the American Baptists.

During the wars which the Indian Government waged with Burma (1852-1856) the Karens sided with the British against their old oppressors the Burmese. English officials were disposed at first to deal with them as a weak and pithless race; but the Karens turned

out to be vigorous, energetic, and in every way trustworthy.

Though divided into three sections, they all acknowledge a common ancestry, and they act together without difficulty.

One remarkable thing is that no unkind feeling exists between the converts and the heathen Karens. An old heathen Karen will say: "I am too old to change my life, but my children will be Christians." How unlike is this to the dreadful caste feeling that prevails among the Hindus!

Education has also spread among them to a considerable extent; and there are Karen students connected with the University of Calcutta.

In the great work of bringing in the wilder races I am glad to say that England, Wales, Scotland, America and Germany all have a share. Space fails; otherwise, I could supply very encouraging statistics in this connection.

England, specially through the Church Missionary Society, is working diligently among the Santals, Bhils, Gonds, Kois, and others.

Wales, *i.e.* the Welsh Presbyterian Mission,

has been diligent and successful among the hill tribes of Assam, the Khasis, etc.

Scotland is engaged with the Lepchas, the Santals, and the Bhils. The Mission with which I am best acquainted is that among the Santals. It does not seem long since the work was begun; but had I been told thirty years ago that I should live to see its present state of advancement, I would have answered—"I hope to see it from heaven, but I cannot expect to witness such progress while I remain on earth."

Germany, *i.e.* The Basel Evangelical Mission, works among the Badages on the Nilgiris and others.

America, especially through the Baptist Mission, among the Karens.

The whole body of these aboriginal races we may say is melting away. They are now only about eight millions and a half. But we must not think that all the conversions are to Christianity. Some are absorbed into the great mass of Hindus; others become Muhammadans. In such cases conversion to Christianity becomes doubly, ay trebly, difficult. Our work among the aborigines

ought to be extended before these children of the wilderness shall have passed beyond our reach.

SANTALS.

I cannot but add a few words regarding my personal connection with this interesting tribe. I met in Calcutta, on his return from Europe, a distinguished civilian, William,—afterwards Sir William—Hunter. He well remembered his work among them, and was full of a beautiful enthusiasm regarding the wild people. He kindled a deep interest in my mind regarding them. I proposed to my colleagues to start a mission among them. They agreed at once. Then I wrote home to Dr Duff and the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh, asking permission to do so. The answer of the Committee was: "Do as you think best; but our funds are low, and we can give you no money." I preached a sermon to our European congregation on the proposed effort; and they gave me a very fair collection. I proceeded to Taljhari in the Santal country, and consulted the Rev. Mr Storrs of the C.M.S. Mission, begging him to supply us with two native Christians, and giving him at the same time

half of the collection I had got. Mr Storrs was very friendly and promised to do his best. He found he could supply only one man—a simple lad who could teach but not preach. I have a very distinct recollection of this lad working away in a shed laboriously trying to teach four or five of the duller Santals the alphabet. For some time also a worthy man—an Indo-Briton—was employed to preach; but by and by there came from Scotland Dr Templeton and Mr A. Campbell. Ere long Dr Templeton's health failed, but Dr Dyer soon worthily filled his place; Mr Campbell, now a D.D., has steadily held on and is honoured as a patriarch; and worthy associates have joined them.

BHILS.

A very interesting matter connected with the Bhils is mentioned in the life of that truly remarkable man Sir James Outram. The Bhils in the province of Khandesh had from of old been incorrigible marauders—ever ready to swoop down from the hills on their civilised neighbours in the plains. The Marathea Government had treated them as wild beasts, and their English successors 'had been almost

equally merciless; but the Bhils remained as wild as ever. It then occurred to the Governor of Bombay—the sagacious Mountstuart Elphinstone—that an effort should be made to reclaim them by gentle means. He devised two schemes—one was to establish agricultural settlements of Bhils, and the other to organise a battalion of Bhil soldiers under a British officer. The latter object Elphinstone intrusted to the care of Outram. Outram, with consummate tact and temper, entered into the governor's plans; and in less than four years the province of Khandesh was completely pacified. Rightly did Elphinstone's successor—Sir John Malcolm—congratulate Outram on the remarkable combination of firmness, kindness, and perseverance which had achieved so important a result. When he left it, the Bhil corps was 900 strong. This was the fit commencement of a high career of one who has been rightly styled *Sans peur et sans reproche.*

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